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# LITTLE WHITE LIES

*Truth & Movies*

MARJANE  
SATRAPI:  
THE QUEEN  
OF CANNES  
GETS  
ANIMATED

GUILLERMO  
DEL TORO

HARMONY  
KURTINE

NAFI  
WITTS

CATHERINE  
BREILLAT

PAUL  
GREENGRASS

NICK  
BROOMFIELD

ROY  
ANDERSSON

MICHAEL  
PITT

THE  
*Persepolis*  
ISSUE





"TRUST THE  
PEOPLE. THEY'LL  
DO ALL THEY CAN  
TO KEEP THEIR  
FREEDOM."

WORDS BY  
MATT BOCHENSKI



# CHAPTER **ONE** IN WHICH WE DISCUSS PERSEPOLIS

PERSEPOLIS  
RELEASED MAY 25

Marjane Satrapi has emerged from the underground to sock it to the big boys



"Animation is like the Wild West," says Marjane Satrapi. "Anything is possible." Really? Animation may be the Wild West, but its sense of possibility has been horse-whipped and run out of town. The corporate cowboys are in charge, and unless you're a CGI penguin or wisecracking donkey, you can expect to be on the receiving end of some lynch-law justice.

But for anybody who believes that 2D is dead, Marjane Satrapi just brought it back to life. Her debut film, *Persepolis*, is a black-and-white French-language, hand-drawn animation set in post-revolutionary Iran. And it's a powerful reminder that old-fashioned values still count: that originality, creativity and risk-taking can take animation beyond the ghetto of family entertainment and make it artful.

Of course, 2D never really died, not while the likes of Sylvain Chomet and Michel Ocelot kept its heart beating. But in America, traditional animation was given a rough ride by the success of *Pixar* and the major studios suffered a failure of nerve. So what if *The Iron Giant* proved that there was life left in the hand-drawn format? There was a new dimension out there. CGI was the future, and everything else was history.

In 2004, Disney closed its 2D animation studio in Florida. And though ironically John Lasseter's appointment as Disney Creative Officer might reverse the decline, even the previously infallible Pixar guru has started to succumb to the lure of diminishing returns. What seemed like a brave new world has somehow stagnated. They promised the story would be long, but it's formula and familiarity that rule. ▼

Mariam Satrapی may not be able to tell the slide, but she does offer a glimmer of hope. Working in a Persian shade with a minuscule budget and underground ethos, she proves that there's still a place at the table for the little guy if her personality that gives Persepolis its unique identity and it's that identity that makes the film an act of such glorious defiance.

Based on Satrapi's own graphic novels, *Persepolis* begins as a child's-eye memory of the Iranian revolution. It's 1979 and Mary (voiced as a youngster by Golshifteh Farahani, and as an adult by Cherie Blair-Morehouse) is a nine-year-old girl whose childhood dreams of Bruce Lee and shaving her legs are replaced by the altogether more adult realisation of politics. As their parents march into the bulletins of the Shah's army, Isabelle the chipping of suspected secret policemen or chem slogans that none of them understand.

Mary is spellbound by her Uncle Anoushir, a 'romantic' who has been released from jail to help plan the future of the country. But

what begins as a people's uprising morphs into an Islamic revolution, and though Anoushir clings to the belief that the people will choose freedom, he is soon back in jail. The law is introduced, and alcohol and music are banned. In the midst of this upheaval, Mary undergoes her own radical changes. The excited girl grows up to a rebellious teenager who is sent to Europe for her own safety. And though she returns to Iran, it is only to tell the same for her friend too.

In Persian history, Persepolis was the last but capital of the ancient empire. To Satrapi, it becomes a monument to better times only partially remembered, and perhaps only half true, but a powerful, fascinating nonetheless. And that, indeed, is the heart of her film: it's a poem of exile and dislocation and the weary list, love for home and family. That loves shows itself in particular in the beautifully simple switches with which Mary's parents and grandmother are brought to life. Her grandmother, voiced by Derné Darmoush, is the film's most anchor and emblematic apex. While Mary is a precocious heroine, foisted around by fate and circumstance, her grandmother



is the rock that she clings to. Their voices begin to rise, reverberating, so intense with memory that it feels like you're intruding on a private grief. Then, without missing a beat, Satrapi will evoke a note of caucasian physical comedy or offbeat imagination and the tone will suddenly shift. How many revolutions, after all, feature Kim Jong Il taking a snooz in God?

And yet this highly personal story reaches out beyond the experiences of its author. The Tehran that we see before the revolution could be London or Paris or New York. Though the political atmosphere was toxic, for most Iranians it was very much the same as in any other metropolitan capital. And even after the revolution, when "every aspect of our lives changed and so did we," the people of Iran found ways not just to survive, but to carry on living. Perkins moved underground and sex became more discrete, but life became a story of everyday revolutions, each one a victory against the new regime.

Indeed, largely the film's colour scheme – by showing us this amorphous sort of Iran, Satrapi has taken a black and white issue and invested it with new colour. The iron that we see every day – the 'kiss of evil', the terrorist state – is not the iron of the Iranian people. Our media would tell us that Iranians are defined by hatred, while Persepolis shows us the fear and disbelief that united the country. They were angry just as we would be angry at the loss, the social hypocrisy and the dehumanising absurdity of their government – one in which a window cleaner can become a government minister because he grows a beard and reads the Koran. But in showing that the people of Iran are no different from us – were not in some way predisposed towards accepting a repressive regime – Satrapi suggests that it could happen just as easily to us. And before we laugh at the suggestion, it's worth gazing uncrossly over the Atlantic at a country where a Great and Powerful president, or closer to home, when a liberal politician can't admit to being an atheist without a farfetched apology. ▼



If there is a criticism of the West it is in what happens to the country after it is invaded by Iraq. Here, Persepolis assumes an apocalyptic tone, having its initial cues from wartime propaganda posters and its pricing from the pessimistic bent of suicide bombings. The war informed and encouraged by the US and UK, changed everything in Iran. "Only one half alive," Persepolis' cold-eyed retort. "That of blood." As young men are offered a plastic key to heaven where they lie gorged on an endless supply of wages, the ugly toll of carnage takes hold, decimating the country. These are the film's ongoing stories, and though the primary target remains the Iranian government, they're hard to watch without a sense of guilty complicity. Perhaps that accounts for the ambivalent shot of a *Vogue* cover which hints suggestively that the dangers of Western imperialism might be real.

If all this sounds like a violent history lesson, it's one which is sugar-coated by the film's extraordinary visual scheme. Though there are occasional lapses into exposition – as when Uncle Arouche recounts the story of his exile – these are often the film's most arresting moments. They're also usually comic, like reading from some ancient Arabic text decorated with obscure arabic motifs. Some short, abrupt, wry and playful fits give Persepolis a kind of non-linear quality too; as if the stories in front of you aren't being extracted from the pages of a converted comic book, but have rather been dragged up from some place deep inside like a recovered memory.

And besides, for all the film's political sympathies, it gradually reveals itself to be less a cause than some bygone age as a celebration of the here and now. Despite the exile, the hardship and the near total inutility, above everything Marjane represents the defiant possibilities of youth. That's something no regime can deny, even when they renounce its symbols and trappings. It's that youthful spirit that keeps her alive (as captured in arguably the greatest movie marriage of all time, definitely scored in *Eye of the Tiger*) and moreover keeps her country alive too, whatever the price.

Though it's tempting to give credit to an individual author, in truth, Persepolis is testament to the incredible work of the team assembled by Sarbjit and her co-director Vahid Farmanfar. Marjane herself appears in a small cameo – a reflection of his humility rather than the role he played in the film's production. Likewise, every single one of who spent hours hand-drawing over 800 characters, and those who traced every last, these in black ink, and the background designers and the colonists and the rest deserve every word of praise that comes their way. Because these are the people proving that it's not just the lesser new world that counts, it's the artistry and wonder of the old one too. ■

Read in page 34 for an interview with Marjane Satrapi



Marjane Satrapi  
Illustrator, *Persepolis*,  
and screenwriter,  
*Amélie*. She  
lives in Paris, France.

2007: A female  
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world. And she's  
not alone. She's got her  
team.



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NEW YORK TIMES



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EXCELLENT"  
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PRESENTS

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it was like there, and their terrorist allies, constitute an  
army of evil, aiming to dominate the planet if the world.  
By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes  
pose greater and growing danger. They could provide  
these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to attack  
the United States. They could attack our allies or staging an  
attack on the United States. In any of those cases, the  
President's authority would be unquestioned.

We will work closely with our friends to develop terrorism  
and those who sponsor it—through intelligence, technology,  
and expertise to make and detect weapons of mass  
destruction. We will develop and deploy effective missile  
defenses to protect Americans and our allies from outside  
attack. And all nations should know: America will do  
what is necessary to protect our nation's security.

George Bush, State of the Union Address  
January 26, 1991

# CHAPTER TWO IN WHICH **WE** INTRODUCE OURSELVES



**LWLine**

What do I know about movies?

**Bill Plym**

Mark, can I ask what I have about movies? Well, Frank Capra once it better than anyone else, he said - and that is in the '40s - Frank Capra said, "Filmmaking is like heaven" - now you should it's for life." So I think that sums it up. I think once you have a film you're in trouble because you have to do it all the time to get that same shot.



Issues, processes and universal



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carhartt



LETTERS

This issue, a proper disagreement, can send us on our way and a quick review of Sherry's book. Remember, whoever sends us the most thought-provoking critique, or maybe just the best put-down, will receive two copies of Color Me! and a stampin' party. Possibly.

FUTURE PROOF?

**Sabine** - June 96  
**Meeting** - China - one Chinese  
at the top of the tree at our house  
there were national heroes  
including the 1000 year  
heroes or many heroes and  
successful soldiers, all  
responsible to work hard or  
leading roles.  
**Kathleen Cooper**  
The idea for the piece  
came from speaking to a  
number of French directors  
who all raised their  
expectations with the  
staggering pool of looking  
female actresses. While  
you're right that in  
another country we would  
be celebrating the strong  
roles offered to middle-  
aged ladies, their conclusion  
was that in Hollywood the  
norm, French cinema was  
undermining its future  
then by depicting a concept  
with aging, and we  
took a deliberately  
provocative stance while  
doing so. To do so against  
the majority of the  
actresses you name were  
all born in the late '60s  
or early '70s. There are  
not a new generation, just  
an older one that has  
already wasted the last

for the opportunity and  
the chance to inflict  
a similar situation on  
the next.

PAFTA BASINGC

Dear Mrs. President—  
I beg you to excuse me for troubling you again, but I have written to you before, and I am still awaiting your answer.  
I am enclosing a copy of my letter to the Secretary of State, and I would appreciate it if you could forward it to him.  
Thank you very much for your time and attention.  
Sincerely yours,  
John Doe

**Pete**  
But take on the major  
media stories is pretty  
straightforward? They're  
politically motivated  
because stories where  
people just aren't all  
that interested in it or don't  
care really want to know  
why we ignore them, all have  
something to do with the  
main story about growing Mycenaean  
Classical or something on the  
other stuff? Well, seriously,  
you'd rather not.

#### **GOOD COVERAGE**

Congratulations on The Young Will and the Butterfly issue. It's a bold move and (definitely) a brave move to put a limited press run on the issue of the magazine.

STATEMENT OF INCOME

I've just got back from  
visiting Swainly Todd who  
wanted me to compare my  
reaction toward it<sup>n</sup> to  
mine. I floundered through  
the map and then realized  
that not all three (because  
you are in?) have given

A minor (chord, major) uses up some of your tension with the last notes. For the record, it's reasonably evaluated if it's a dark version of *Frère Jacques* recited in song that you've never heard, or heard once.

FREE STUDY

When I picked up the book  
yesterday off the shelf, I was  
delighted to find a bare  
DVD. Please do you make  
an angular momentum DVD?

A black and white photograph of a hand wearing a white glove, gripping a golf club. The club's head is heavily stained with dark red blood, and a single drop hangs from the end of the clubhead. The background is a soft-focus, out-of-focus scene.

LET THE GAMES BEGIN...

NAOMI TIM MICHAEL BRADY  
WATTS ROTH PITT CORBET

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WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY MICHAEL HANEKE

IN CINEMAS APRIL 4

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"What's wrong with you, boy? Look at you,  
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**CHAPTER  
THREE**

IN WHICH WE DISCUSS

**THEMES**

OF UNCOMMON INTEREST

**INSPIRED**

BY OUR FEATURE FILM



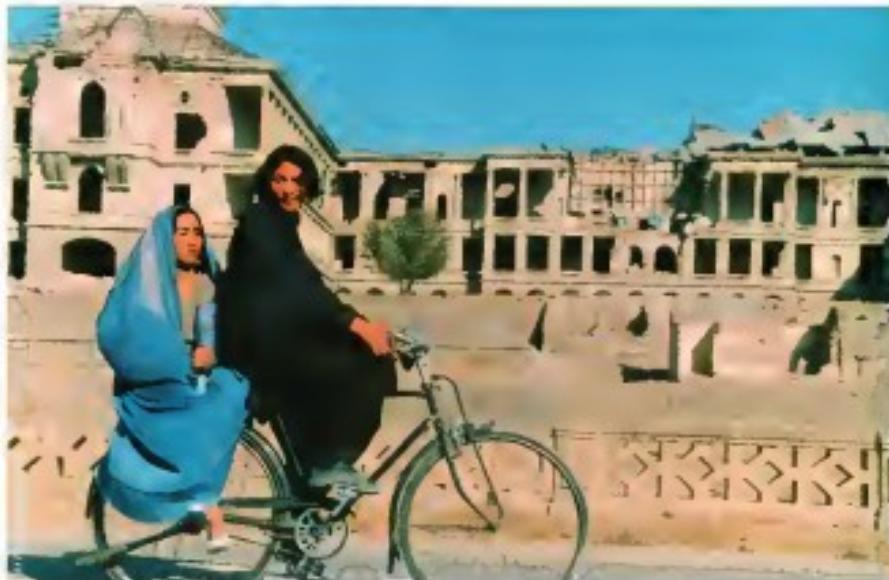
## SECRET CINEMA

FILMMAKER AND JOURNALIST MARK COUSINS TRAVELED ACROSS IRAN IN AN EFFORT TO GET CLOSER TO ITS PEOPLE, CULTURE AND CINEMA. HERE, HE SHARES HIS DISCOVERIES.

## Anything that's stigmatised is interesting and, as I've discovered, Iran is particularly so.

Women alone, cycling without the hijab. But not when it comes to cinema. Stop people in the street in the poor north of the city or the poor south, and they speak passionately about movies.

The success of Iranian cinema speaks for itself. Tehran based directors have won, per capita, more movie prizes than those of any other country in recent years. Way back in 1986, for example, their feature films made 755 appearances at international film festivals while Britain, which has the same population, didn't manage half that. Some of the best women filmmakers in the world today are Iranian and even the country's teenagers are winning top prizes. Alireza Karimian, Jean-Luc Godard and Werner Herzog, no less, all called Abbas Kiarostami one of the greatest living filmmakers. One American critic said that: "We are living in the era of Kiarostami, but we don't yet know it."



The paradox is this: Iran is not a rich country. Unlike the UK, it played no role in the invention of cinema. Its artists are not free. Its religion is suspicious of imagery. Its film equipment is not state-of-the-art. The freedom of its women is curtailed. Yet for over a decade now, Tehran-based directors have been among the most innovative in the world. How come? What is going on? Is there something in the water in Tehran? (And if so can we have some at a pronto?)

The first, perhaps unexpected, answer is that Iranian cinema was hijacked. Like other movie houses of the end of the 1970s, Iran's cinemas showed madly escapist entertainment films with lots of sex and violence. In one of his first speeches on returning to Iran in 1979, Ayatollah Khomeini said that he wasn't against cinema, just the sloazy direction it had taken. Like Lenin before him, he felt that movies could 'purify' his country, and so his Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance put in place a set of prohibitions. Iranian directors could not show women's hair or body parts, sexual touching of any sort, or anti-government comment. What is less well known is that they also banned 'decadent behaviour', vulgarity and the degradation of people on grounds of ethnicity or class. The latter is believed from a regime which was more murderous than the one it replaced, but the paradox is that the puritanism of the new Islamic Republic was rather similar to, say John Grierson's social mission for documentary in the 1920s. David Puttnam's attempts to create African cinema while at Columbia, or the work of John Sayles.

This may sound like a recipe for dull and worthy films but the opposite was the case. Under the influence of MTV, global cinema speeded up in the 1980s. Yet compared to the internal rush of *Top Gun* or the glossy emptiness of *Subway* or *Risky Business*, Iran's genius, more elemental movies came as a welcome surprise. Enhanced innovation protected them from the neatest pressures of mainstream cinema and afforded them the freedom to experiment and look at the details of life in fine grain. This they did, with great success.

When most of us still have a Proustian association between cinema and escapism, romance and softness, in Iran entertainment and education don't claim to easily. Truamers of all types are still arguing about what their country should be like, so the idea that the movies are a place to go for a couple of hours to switch your brain off doesn't seem to have the same appeal. Perhaps another reason for this is the literary tradition of the country. In the Western world, cinema grew out of theatre and, in particular, the novel. Iran has no novel tradition, no Charles Dickens. But its poets – Omar Khayyam, Hafez, Sa'di – are revered and quoted by musicians and literature peasant alike. Poetry is part of life and cinema does from this. The country's first great filmmaker, Forough Farrokhzad, was first and foremost a poet. *The House is Black*, which she made not long before she died in a car accident at the age of 32, is one of the best films ever made anywhere. The country's other leading filmmaker – Genaush Mekhrizi – told me that he too was more influenced by poetry than anything else.

Her remark brings us to the question of women in Iranian film. The last few filmmakers are Marziyeh Meshkati – female. Before her, the outstanding talent was Samira Makhmalbaf – female. Last year she was represented on the Cannes jury by Niki Karimi – female. The country has a far higher proportion of women directors than America or England, where they are less and equal. I asked Makhmalbaf, Karimi and Farrokhzad why they seem to have achieved compared to Western female directors. The latter answered best: "Liberation can make you think more clearly and seize the chance to express yourself. [Women in Iran] are like compressed springs. This moment we are released, we jump to considerable heights." But like the other two, the point she really wanted to make is that Western women are not necessarily more free or equal to men. "Maybe women in the West haven't thought about the meaning of freedom and have taken it for granted. Does freedom really mean that headache they make me wear, or the short skirt they make your women wear? Men never have to wear skirts. Why? That's the question." ▼





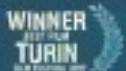
Alia Farahin/Alamy

So poverty and prohibition explain why Iran's cinema is so distinctive. And in case it sounds like the themes of these filmmakers are only local and domestic, consider this: the first good film about Afghans after the bombings was Simona Makhmalbaf's *At Five in the Afternoon*. The first important film about AIDS in Africa was Abbas Kiarostami's *ABC Africa*. The first film made in Iraq in decades was Bahman Ghobadi's recent *Turtles Can Fly*. Why can't other countries like ours, with better cameras, cables, and swifter technology, get its filmmakers out into the world as much as Iran does? Yes, British directors like Michael Winterbottom and Ken Loach are internationalists, but the Iranians are too, and their films are better.

After three weeks there, however, I discovered a few less familiar reasons why the country makes such great films. I'd been to Iran before – I drove the length of its West-East diagonal – so was not surprised by the warmth of its people, their lack of hatred of the West, the beauty of the architecture or how quickly at home I once again felt. But I had never worked there before, and that was the eye opener. Together with a great team of inspiring colleagues, I learned trying to interview all the key filmmakers and, in some cases, take them back to locations where they had filmed decades before. Without exception this happened. Everyone said 'Yes!' Every door opened. People made themselves available the day we called, or the next, at our convenience. We shot on sets and in cutting rooms, with the top stars and the landmark directors.

The can-do here of this wins a surprise, and leads me on to my bigger discovery: the complete flexibility of filming in Iran. We went there to make one documentary but came back with three. I have worked with great film crews in the UK and other countries but have never quite experienced the degree of freedom we had as filmmakers in Iran to change our minds, to find the spark of an idea and then realize it. This is the rub of the matter: it is the inertia of filmmaking – its resistance to changes of plan, its heaviness of foot – which often sucks the life out of it. Conversely, flexibility of approach is rooted in a film culture where the time between idea and realization is reduced.

Could it be that the Western countries that invented cinema have forgotten how to use it boldly? In its quest to entertain us, has Hollywood underestimated film's brilliant ability to capture the raw complexities of human life? The answer is almost certainly 'Yes', but it is easier to ask too much of entertainment movies. What is more concerning is that the range of Occidental filmmaking seems to have narrowed. The Orient seems to be where the innovation and the passion are in cinema. Who are the West's most original directors – David Lynch? Lars von Trier? Is it possible to imagine either making a great movie about Iraq? Or Darfur? The answer is not clear cut but the question should disturb us. ■



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WHEN I WAS, THE TIMES

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IN SELECTED CINEMAS NATIONWIDE MARCH 7



**NO  
PLACE  
LIKE  
HOME**

# IRANIAN RAFI PITTS OFFERS AN INSIDER'S ACCOUNT OF HIS COUNTRY, COMMUNITY AND FILM INDUSTRY.

WORLD BY MATT BOCHENSKI

"IF WE COME TO EXTREMES IN OUR COUNTRY, IT'S ONLY A REACTION THAT HAS BEEN PUSHED INTO US BY WHAT HAPPENED IN OUR HISTORY."

"For me, the essence of filmmaking is to put yourself in danger," says Iranian director Rafi Pitts. With an American naval fleet parked on his doorstep and fingers twitching on the nuclear button, he must be having the time of his life right now.

Contrary to popular imagination, Pitts is a sophisticated internationalist rather than some frothing Jihadist. Born in the northern city of Mashhad in 1967, he was only 14-years-old when the war with Iraq sent the newly minted regime into meltdown. He fled to England where he earned a degree in film and photography, and a slot at the London Film Festival for his first short, *In Exile*. In the '90s he moved to Paris, worked with Godard and annoyed the French critics with two features, *The Fifth Season* and *Saram*. In 2006, *It's Winter*, a beetle-browed gem about manhood and emasculation in modern Iran, became his first film to get a UK release. Given this nomadic background, it's no wonder that his sympathies "have always been with marginalised people".

If the powers-that-be get their way, Iran may become much more

marginalised (and significantly flatter) over the next few years. Even for as seemingly apolitical director like Pitts ("I don't like politicians"), the topic of his homeland is thus never far from his mind. Recalling the kind of newspaper and television images that have come to define Iran in the West, he says, "Any part of the world when it portrays another part will always portray the extreme sides. The truth is that 70 per cent of our population is under the age of 30, but how many points of view of Iran have we had from the outside world about the 70 per cent who aren't necessarily concerned by politics at all?"

Pitts shares with his countrymen a feeling that Iran has been misunderstood and mistreated by the West: "When you live in a country where there was a revolution and the reaction of the outside world was to give weapons to Iraq and a million people died, it's only natural that people wonder, 'Why?' That's why there's all this confusion. I think if we come to extremes in our country, it's only a reaction that has been pushed into us by what happened in our history... There's no hatred in the population." \*



Iran, he concludes, is a "complicated" country, and it has a cinematic heritage to match. Pitts is one of a new generation of Iranian filmmakers who have come of age in the post-revolutionary era. Finding international recognition even as they struggle with the domestic constraints of Islamic law.

Thanks to their festival success, we've tended to focus upon the likes of Abbas Kiarostami, Jafar Panahi, Samira Makhmalbaf and Pitts himself as the flag-bearers of "Iranian cinema". But Pitts is sceptical about the term. "We never believed in any national cinema," he says. "When I look at Italian cinema, is it the Tarantini brothers or Antonioni? Is it Pasolini or Fellini? For me, cinema is the point of view of a person. I come from Iran where there are 80 million points of view, so you can't pin it down to one person representing an entire nation – that's completely absurd." At best we might describe the type of Iranian cinema so admired by the rest of the world as "neo-realistic", but even that, he says, is complicated by the fact that the filmmakers are fundamentally different, whether stylistically, thematically or ideologically. And besides, even this narrowed definition of Iranian cinema misses the point. "The most difficult thing for a filmmaker is to just be yourself," he argues, "but the world of cinema doesn't like that. It's afraid of originality so we put things in a box. But if Iranian cinema, as it's called outside, is kept in a box, it will not last very long. That's a way of killing it because you are not appreciating the variety within the system."

It seems astonishing to outsiders that Iranian cinema has not self-destructed of its own accord. Its defining characteristic is censorship – a series of

prescriptive rules that limit many of the things that we take for granted. Actors and actresses aren't allowed to hold hands, and women can never be shown without the headscarf, even in bed. And yet commercial cinema (which, according to Pitts, resembles Bollywood, "only we're not allowed to sing or dance") is thriving in Iran alongside the more internationally celebrated neo-realists. But if it's a miracle that films get made at all, Pitts has an even more surprising take on the situation. "For the outside world it seems very violent, but for us it's always been there," he says. "In fact, as crazy as it seems, if you took it away our cinema would collapse because our entire cinematic language stems from censorship."

The boundaries put in place by censorship have forced Iranian filmmakers to reassess the way they approach cinema. It has given rise to the neo-realists' oblique and studied style, where romance and melodrama are replaced with allegory and allusion. Indeed, Pitts suggests that Western filmmakers hardly have the right to call themselves 'Yours'. After all, our cinema is dictated by box office results, just as his is governed by clerical decrees. The question is simply which obstacles you would rather live with. "In Iran," says Pitts, "even though we've got censorship, we have the freedom of artistic choice. We have other boundaries, but for me the artistic choice is more important than the economic one." Is he concerned that outsiders will look down on Iranian cinema because it is censored? "What the world thinks is not what we're concerned by," he answers. "We're just concerned with getting on with it. That's the reality of Iran."

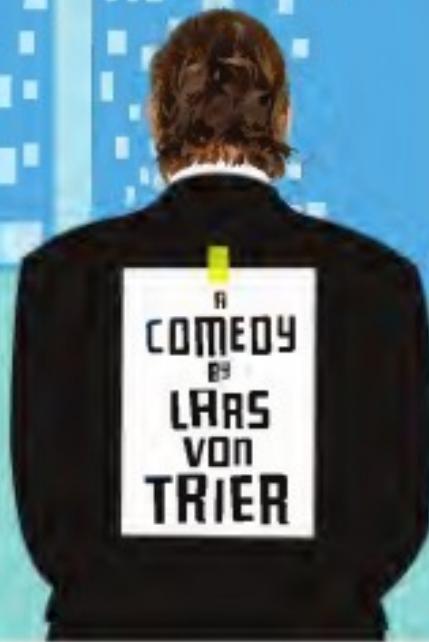
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'HILARIOUS'



EYE FOR FILM

IN CINEMAS FROM 29TH FEBRUARY





WORDS BY MATT ROTH  
ILLUSTRATION BY CLAUDIO

# CITIZEN MARJI

SHE WAS CROWNED QUEEN AGAINST IRAN'S  
SATRAPI FOUND A HOME ON THE CANNES CLERICS AND  
WORLD MARJANE STAGE?

**"I HAVE ALWAYS SAID WHAT I FELT, AND  
ONCE IN A WHILE I PAY A HIGH PRICE,  
BUT IT'S ALWAYS BETTER TO PAY A  
HIGH PRICE THAN TO LOSE YOUR DIGNITY."**

**Marjane Satrapi careers into the bar of a London hotel.**

bt, what have historians got to do with the case of the  
Stern brothers? The news media keep calling this a  
moral tragedy for us, and yet its oft an issue that  
we just brush off every two weeks, middle East. Maybe the  
news and the tragedy is such a farce, the tragedy about Syria, about Israel,  
about Hitler, but we always shrug it off. It's like it's a weapon,  
with a shiny part of the

As her new Big, *Pelékuwa*, says, 'Between his head more than four spans of handbreadths could be spanned'. Based on her own graphic novels, it follows the journey of young 'Miry', from the excitement of the invasion (resistance to her) to her exile in George, a fraught return and, a final, wrenching farewell.

It was either new home or Peris that she can become interested in. She started to draw comics. "I always thought that comics were for adolescent people because you have to make a story how it's told in pieces, you have to make the themes, and then after all that, you have to look at it and make it beautiful," she says. "Then I realized that I was obsessing myself. And there are so many things that didn't need to be made in comic form—it's a little like the Wild West; you can do anything."

The corners were an instant success, while the unrotated film they installed, despite being made in relatively old fashion 2D, and in black and white to boot, took a share of the Jury Prize at Cannes last May. It was the sophomore of a feature director "firebrand," she says. "I was taking anti-anxiety pills before the screening because

I am that blow to a heart attack? Then the phone had a 20-minute standing session. I was on my way to hypoglycemia!

Like the company, his film's visual style—photographs from Steinberg's experience of the underground art of Berlin and Breslau—has a seven million euro budget. "It will always come from a free-lance perspective," he says. "The four responsible stayed impossibly close to their roots: 'You should just have aappy names,'" recalls Steinberg. "They were things listening everyone was saying again." Now they have had the big hand. "When you come from the underground, lots of work doesn't fresh you out," he says. "This is what art would be about—you work because you like your work, not to get paid."

**Now that her story has embedded itself in the mainstream**

**REVIEW IN THE MIRROR** *Autobiography*, however, comes the prospect of millions of people seeing the intimate details of Brigitte's life splashed across the screen. Peleggioli explores some uncomfortable moments of the revolution, including the occasion of her birth, and it's also an unbearably honest account of her own youthful mistakes, filling in with the wrong choices, and in love with the wrong boys. He says that's why she's determined that people shouldn't think of the film as an *autobiography*: "No, no, believe me, it is not an *autobiography*," she says. "I'm definitely not writing because you have a problem with your mother and you want revenge. I'm not making a message on anybody." How to describe it then? Is there a line of capture? Therapy perhaps? An attempt to get everything down on paper and film and then move on? "This movie

outfit of thorndyke," she said. "No, no, no! The Roman Empire is dying now; it is only logical that our world has to become political, or historical, or something! You're talking about what the world will do next."

"Okay, but even if you overlap the first that's just asserted the definition of an ideologue—the claim that it's not political or it has failed to resolve. Anybody who makes a claim about it in today's climate is automatically taking a political position. The Iranian admissions certainly seemed to think so when they banned Penitentiary, calling it "anti-Islam" and "anti-Shariah." Salazar, however, takes a typically contrary position: "What is political? Politics is answers—very quick, stupid answers—to complex questions. I mean give any answer, I mean, judge, I always consider the situation and you as a reader or reader can make up your own mind. I'm not interested in politics," he continues, "politics is interested in me. If people want to make a decision and it only affects them, that's fine. I have no problem with it; the problem is when they make a decision and I have to sit there."

What's unfortunate is the estimated cost of making the film. It's been eight years since *Scrooged* was lined up, and it's unlikely they'll be welcomed back my time soon. Why? Answered well for the chance to save morale and money ("I cannot change myself," she says). "I have always said what I feel, and once in a while I pay a high price, but it's always better to pay a high price than to lose your dignity." That doesn't make it any easier to be away from home, however. She misses "everything" about L.A., "the smell of the pollution, the mountains with glacial snow over them, the life.

"a guardian of the city; the habitual lots of things like that. You always have a very irreverent relationship with the place of your birth that you don't have with anywhere else."

**This continued exile makes her uniquely placed** to question some of the

# DESIGN REPUBLIC

IRAN UNDERWENT MANY CHANGES IN THE WAKE OF THE 1979 REVOLUTION. THE SOURCES OF CREATIVE INFLUENCE EXPANDED AS A RESULT OF THE UPRISING, AND THE PASSING OF TIME HAS INCORPORATED THOSE CHANGES INTO THE COUNTRY'S CULTURAL FABRIC IN WAYS THAT MAY SURPRISE MOST WESTERNERS. REZA ABEDINI AND HANS WOLBERS' NEW VISUAL CULTURE OF MODERN IRAN DOCUMENTS THESE CHANGES AND SHOWCASES SOME OF THE MOST INNOVATIVE WORK FROM ILLUSTRATORS, GRAPHIC DESIGNERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS LIVING AND WORKING IN THE COUNTRY TODAY.



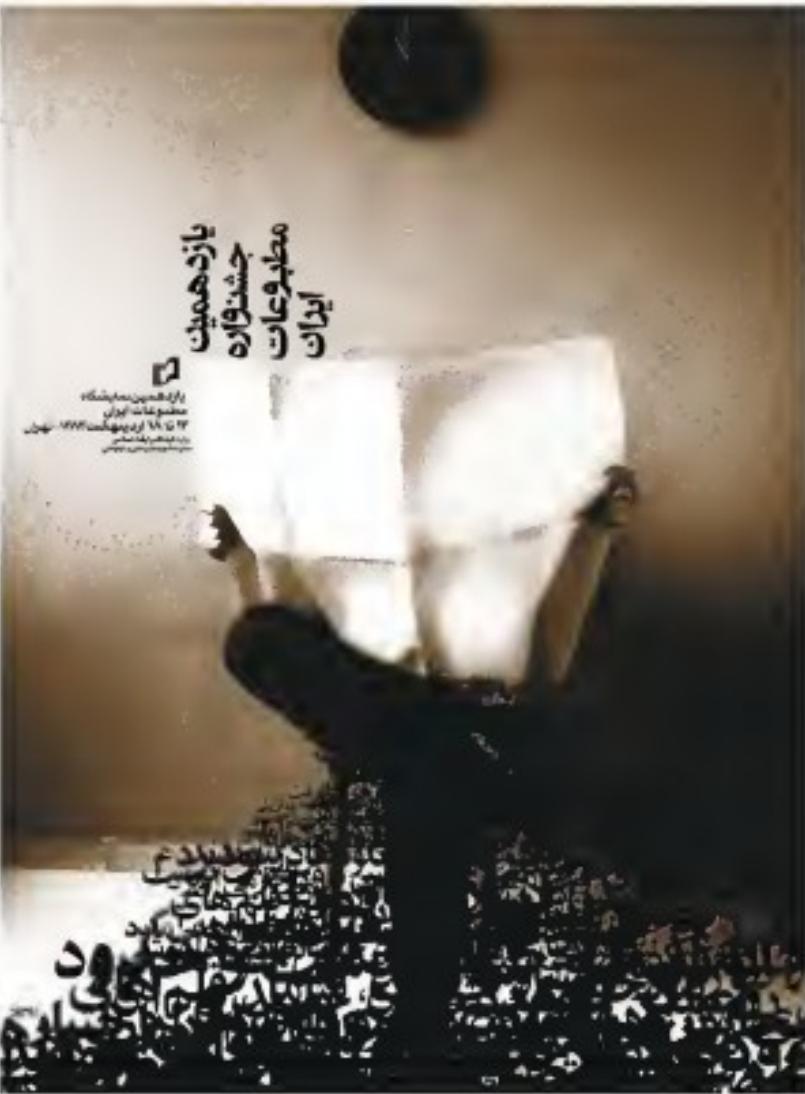
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# STREET SPIRIT

THEY MIGHT NOT COURT INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION, BUT ON THE STREETS OF TEHRAN, IRANIAN GRAFFITI ARTISTS ARE RISKING PRISON TO KEEP THE SPIRIT OF THE UNDERGROUND ALIVE.

It may be low on B-boys and backwards caps, but Iran's capital boasts an underground graffiti scene that uses lots of all-eyes rising movements to scrub their sentiments on the streets. They may be basic, but the pieces on display around Tehran are a finger to the religious autocracy, letting them know that young Iranians are enjoying the very things the government would deny them - Western music, fashion, drugs... even love.



It's hard to believe that 'eshigh', a word translating literally as 'romantic love', could be subversive, but this is a country where it's a calculated risk for young couples to walk hand in hand. Police regularly stop boys and girls in the same car to question their relationship, and the only acceptable answer is husband and wife, or brother and sister. Without身份证 to prove it, you may find yourself carted off to the station.

The religious misdeeds presented by clothing restrictions is one that young Iranians are all too willing to wander into as a means of making a statement. It's the girls, however, who have had to make the most adjustments, not only knowing how far back it may be worth before it becomes a sport, but also managing to turn it into an icon of Iranian femininity along the way – surely one of the most impressive feats of aesthetic evolution in fashion.

Some 80 per cent of Afghanistan's opium and heroin

leaves the country via Iran, and drug addiction is an almost accepted part of society. Recently, however, designer drugs like ecstasy have become a common currency for young people, who regularly leave the city to dance the night away behind the closed doors of a family villa beside the Caspian Sea. As a result, techno is making inroads into the popular consciousness in an assault on traditional Iranian music.

Most car drivers, once they've snatched a switch of English in their backseats, will do everything in their power to prove that they're wise to the intricacies of Western culture. Often, this will mean slipping a CD into the stereo, and letting their tunes do the talking. The results can be mildly disconcerting; music is bought on 10th from CD rappers in the local bazaars, who compile 40ish mixes of what they think is currently popular in the States. Don't be surprised if the Backstreet Boys, Bryan Adams or Elton John accompany you through the city. ■

# SINGING THE DEVIL'S SONGS

Few countries boast a culinary culture as sublime as Iran's – its stews flavoured with herbs most Westerners have never heard of, even the cheapest of its chicken kebabs marinated in more saffron than most non-Iranians will see in their lifetime. Yet spend an afternoon driving around upmarket Tehran and you might well be mistaken for thinking you've stumbled into the American Midwest, so popular are the pizza houses, burger joints and ice-cream parlours lining the streets. ▼

**IN A COUNTRY WHERE WESTERN MUSIC – AND EVEN DANCING – IS ILLEGAL, THE FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT TO PARTY HAS BECOME A BATTLE FOR THE NATION'S SOUL.**

WORDS BY CYRUS SHAHNAZ  
ILLUSTRATION BY GINA REICHER



# "WESTERN RAPPERS AND ROCK STARS MEAN NOTHING TO US AS IRANIANS – ALTHOUGH SOME KIDS WOULD LIKE TO PRETEND OTHERWISE."

The same is true of Iranian music. Sparse, spiritual and loaded with cosmic sadness, traditional Iranian music has, for centuries, expressed both the ceaseless struggles and unspeakable beauty of this great nation – yet ask those same legions of kids shuffling in and out of fast food franchises to name a single traditional Iranian singer, and they may well look blankly back at you. Almost all, however, will be able to tell you their favourite Eminem song, most will be able to recite it word for word.

Not that all of Iran's youth is so bowled over by the pop idols, rock stars and rap activists of the nation that Iranians continue to refer to as the 'Great Satra'. Kaveh and Kianan Marzban are two of those fighting to preserve the links with traditional music. Both doctors in their early twenties, the brothers spend their spare time performing spiritual Iranian laments on the tar and violin respectively, and are horrified at what they see as the virulent permeation of disposable pop culture across Iran, and its erosion of their rich musical heritage.

"I'm not saying that they don't like it," says Kaveh, "but I think that many kids in Iran listen to American music to prove that they are Westernised – it's a status symbol more than anything, in the same way that their rejection of traditional Iranian music signifies their rejection of the traditional Iranian way of life."

"I think those kids are making a huge mistake," adds Kianan, "because Iranian

music keeps us in touch with our history and tells us so much about who we are. Its values are our values, whereas the values expressed by Western rappers and rock stars mean nothing to us as Iranians – although some kids would like to pretend otherwise."

Irrelevant to the likes of Kaveh and Kianan, those same values are downright offensive to the Iranian government, which continues to outlaw Western music as part of its post-revolutionary policy of cultural isolationism. Western music with lyrics is illegal in Iran, as are the three Ds: drinking, dancing and drugs. What few concessions do come from the authorities are more of a shot in the face than the arm: this summer Chris de Burgh will play the first Iranian concert by a Western musician since the Shah's plane left and Khomeini's touched down almost thirty decades ago.

Yet official attempts to regulate the musical intake of young Iranians seem to be backfiring, steering armies of disillusioned teenagers from the sacred to the profane. Local gyms blare the same throbong Euro house as the hopped-up systems of cars screaming around the city in the small hours of the morning. And if you stop in on any of the house parties those cars are cruising to and from, you'll find kids dancing to exactly the same tunes as they are at house parties in the West.

There are differences, of course. For one thing, every such gathering in Iran must by necessity take place in secret and behind closed doors, yet fear seldom encroaches on the fun: when the police turn up, as they often do, partygoers are prepared with wads of green and blue notes for bribes, and they invariably leave quietly. DJs, meanwhile, play almost exclusively on laptops – the vast majority of Western music consists of illegally downloaded mp3s.

But perhaps the most immediately noticeable difference is the unquenchable enthusiasm for dancing. There are no awkward early hours: most guests are throwing shapes before they've had a chance to take their coat off, let alone pour a drink. Bootleg booze is provided, but largely unnecessary. When you're growing up in the shadow of the Ayatollahs, no one is too sober or too cynical to let off steam on the dance floor. ▼



"There is an unwritten law  
That no one recorded, no one saw:  
"Silently silence the bad voice  
Voicelessness is the only choice."

From 'The Law' by Hichkas,  
translated by Amir Azizmehmedi



# "IRANIAN RAP IS UNCOMPROMISING, EXPERIMENTAL AND, MOST OF THE TIME, MUSICALLY STUNNING."

"Kids here are frustrated," says Borde, an engineering student who lives for the penthouse flat parties thrown by his friends every Thursday night (Friday constitutes the single-day weekend in Iran). "The young people are told what they can't do or think or say, and most of the time those are exactly the things they're instinctively drawn to. All that repression builds up during the week and then pours out on the weekend – partying is social, but it's also about personal release, about escape."

This tendency towards momentary oblivion is something seemingly confirmed by the rise of low-key raves – some of them in the city, some in pre-revolutionary pleasure resorts crumpling beside the Caspian Sea – and the concurrent rise in the use of speed and especially ecstasy. All of which would seem to validate Kavvah's fears about the loss of traditional Iranian values through musical crossbreeding.

Yet for all that, Iran is being rocked by a musical revolution that is as progressive as it is inherently Persian, as cerebral as it is subversive. Iranian rap or 'Rape Fans' remains largely off the radar, not only because its protagonists are wanted men and women, but also because it's only now emerging from the bedrooms and basements in which it's been sculpted over the last seven years. Fans – with its lilting cadences and drawn-out consonants – doesn't lend itself naturally to the rhythms of hip-hop, so writers have had to literally

flip the script and invent a sown-off version of their language that sits between beats more easily.

Nor are Iranian rappers dropping inane lyrics about private jets, diamond rings or the size of their dicks; in many ways, Rap-e Fans is closer to the roots of hip-hop than the MTV-modder dutifully negotiated by the Tiddys and Puttys of this world, born of frustration and disenchantment and setting the world to rights with a forked tongue and fire in its belly. The beats may be basic and the synths reminiscent of an '80s Casio keyboard demo, but rappers like Erfan, Shayan and most notably Hechkar (meaning 'nobody') are being hailed by many as Iran's most powerful modern poets. Journalist and Rap-e Fans researcher Amir Azzamohammadi is one such advocate:

"Iranian rappers share both a sensitive social conscience and a determined moral commitment," says Amir. "Along with their party raps they have dealt with subjects as weighty as poverty, unemployment, addiction, prostitution, child labour, economic corruption, homelessness and the Iraq-Iraq war. Iranian rap is uncompromising, experimental and, most of the time, musically stunning."

All of which would suggest that the relationship between young Iranians and the music they listen to is more complex than many commentators would like to imagine. Yet one thing is certain: the Kavvahs and Kawans of this country are in the majority. Traditional Iranian music may be big on values, but they are values that have no relevance to the youth; it may be rich in history, but these are kids having enough trouble living in the present. And armed with a new appreciation of the transformative power of music – from hard rock to hardcore dance, from pop to hip-hop both home-grown and imported – they are pointing themselves firmly towards the future. ■

Check out [www.idiotrevolution.ca](http://www.idiotrevolution.ca) for an exclusive interview with Rezaee Sardari, founder of Hermax Records, one of Iran's few independent record labels.

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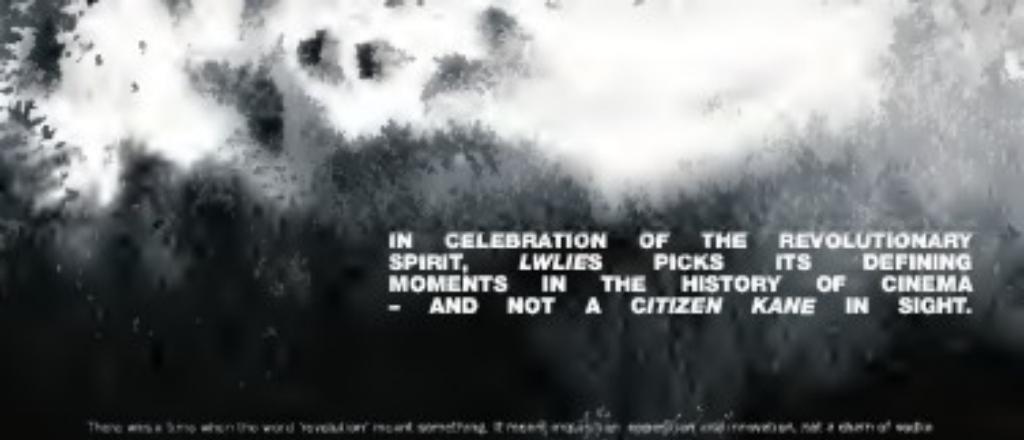
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WORKS BY ANDREAS FEST  
ELIAS STORCK, LEOPOLD KÖNIG, PHILIP

# CINEMA IS REVOLTING





## IN CELEBRATION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT, LWLIES PICKS ITS DEFINING MOMENTS IN THE HISTORY OF CINEMA - AND NOT A CITIZEN KANE IN SIGHT.

There was a time when the word "revolution" meant something. It meant revolution, rebellion and innovation, not a dozen of softie books or a PR firm. In a similar vein this spirit, LWLIES brings you four of the most groundbreaking moments – in artistic, economic, political and philosophical – that shaped the face of cinema. Reader, beware: this time the revolution will be televised.

### THE PERSISTENCE OF VISION, 1895

If you actually stop and think about it, motion pictures are pretty fucking nuts. Sit down in front of a film and you're basically just watching 25 still images every second – like going round the track really, really fast. The fact is that somehow, somehow, Godard had to make that first imaginative leap from seeing a series of stills to experiencing the impression of continuous movement.

That someone was Roman poet and philosopher Titus Lucretius Carus, may be in 1895 (before Godard). In his tract *On the Nature of Things*, Lucretius described the principle of "Persistence of Vision" – an optical illusion in which our eyes continue to register an image even after we stop looking at it. Below the projection rate of a film to anything lower than about 16 frames per second, and your eyes will register a flicker which tells you that you're watching a collection of static. Retract it up any more than that, however, and you'd never the action was taking place in your front room.

Godard's *L'Assommoir* titles were a bit sketchy (it took that old square Prelody of Alexandre Dumas' 200 odd years to confirm the truth of the theory – by which time YouTube was pretty much in beta), but they laid the foundations for an entire visual culture that's still world wide in the screen Friday night, arguing over which Paleolithic movie to watch. Or are they just shadowed on the wall?

### THE CANNES FILM FESTIVAL THAT WASN'T, SEPTEMBER 1939

These days, everyone loves to take a pop at Cannes, with its adventurous parades of private yachts, palm trees and plastic moneymen. Nevertheless, today's playground for the rich and famous was once a hotbed of political debate, and a staunch defender of liberal values in the face of totalitarianism.

Originally conceived as a cultural counterbalance to Mussolini's *Venice Biennale*, the inaugural Cannes festival was postponed after Germany invaded Poland at the start the week was supposed to launch. Sixty long years later, the independent spirit of Cannes had only been further stoked by the horrors of war emerged Europe. Even as the festival reasserted and expanded, however, it retained its radical credentials. The events of the 1946 festival in particular are now legendary: a group of directors – including Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut – invaded the Palais in support of a student protest, ultimately leading to the abdication of the festival for that year.

Cannes has only recently relaunched since its formative years, but it is still firmly committed to nurturing the relationship between cinema, politics and society without being completely subsumed by the market place. Even as Hollywood continues to tighten its iron grip on global film sales, Cannes is a welcome beacon of dissidence. The introduction of the out-of-competition Directors' Fortnight in 1986 (some claim as a direct result of the protests a year earlier), as well as the Encyclopedic strand for upcoming filmmakers, show a continuing commitment to talent which might otherwise struggle to reach a wide audience. Most of all, the continuing cultural significance of Cannes is testament to the pioneering spirit that underpinned its foundation some 60 years ago. ▼



STEVEN SPIELBERG'S SHARK MODEL BREAKS,  
SUMMER 1974

It may sound absurd as pleasure is a key of chastity existing; the panting lips of Russell Brand, but there was once a time in the dim and distant past, when oceans were empty in summer. No one was to have in the pantries like Indiana Jones. He adorably fuelled a childhood that yearned for the sole purpose of taking a shot at the essential crown of 'This Way's Music See Summer Blockbuster'! These days, the hot season is the economics engine room of the studio system, and at the root of that fact lies a very simple truth: Steven Spielberg's shark broke down.

Respect to 1974 where Spielberg and his crew are fumbling around on the ocean waves, miserably over budget and off schedule while shooting *Jaws*. Meltzer hasn't helped any by the fact that the three shark models constructed especially for the film are among the most unreliable ever created. With the hydrophones at three supposedly state-of-the-art sounds malfunctioning due to corrosion from the salt water, Spielberg decides to radically rewrite the script, removing the shark from the screen for long stretches. This masterstroke transforms the film from a run-of-the-mill visual horror punt into a groundbreaking psychological drama, which would go on to smash box office records around the world and redefine the way films were marketed and released for the next 30 years.

When it was finally released in 1979, Spielberg's film opened like no other summer movie in history. Supported by one of the first ever TV advertising blitzes, it earned back its \$7 million budget in the course of a limited opening weekend. All told, the film has now raked up over \$170 million in worldwide rentals, and come to define what it means to be an "event" movie. As Spielberg himself admits, it was part of the film's appeal derived directly from the seemingly disastrous technical fiascos which occurred on set. Speaking to *The Sunday Times* in 2005, the director admitted that, had the shark model been more reliable, "I probably would have used it four times in each, which would have made the film four times less scary." And *Jaws* twice less likely to have been the first-ever summer blockbuster.

THE RED 4K DIGITAL CAMERA IS RELEASED,  
2008

No one likes tech republics. Then again, everyone loves great movies, which is why we should probably celebrate the release of the RED 4K digital camera with some sort of nerd intensity. Let's face it, nerds of all stripes are going to get a kick out about the specs of a new digital camera, but there are plenty of things that will get a laugh. Faster, when the next generation of video telephones. (More photos after the continue.)

So what has that got to do with R&D? The long story short: up to now it was borderline impossible to make a professional feature without offering a pile from a rich relative or loaning your family into hot rockin' postmodern production. Making films is expensive. And where there's money, there's influence, a shorthand formula for why most studio films look like they've passed down the conveyor belt of the Genesis Movie Factory. Not so with R&D. The camera body costs about a quarter of a pro 35mm camera and post production costs aren't even in the same ballpark as film development and transfer. This is an old school Marvel revolution — put the means of production in the hands of the masses and suddenly they can make movies their own way instead of getting up nice and making the man in the suit how he'd like it to be made.

This production model that's found a vocal supporter in the likes of indie king and regular self-shooter Steven Soderbergh (Mystic River, quite fittingly) and one emerged from shooting his due of Che Guevara (Nimis (Gaviria) and The Assassination) on IED in South America, Eastwood is not averse to using the 'TF' word to describe his initial experience with the extreme, whilst he describes as being "like hearing The Beatles for the first time". Indeed, with the advent of IED, it looks as if the Holy Grail might finally be within reach - the establishment at a personally independent zone in which Americans outside the mainstream bring compelling stories with the highest production values to a wide and eclectic audience. Intrinsic to ■



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*A DVD review will make  
you feel like you've  
watched more than the two hours you  
spent sitting in the cinema, our  
reviews are a chance to talk about  
much more than the individual  
experience of the film in question.  
There are many different aspects  
of the movie-going experience  
and we will embrace them all.*

### **Anticipation**

Ever waited months for a book  
author to finish? Read a book that  
you loved and nervously watched  
the adaptation? Been pleasantly  
surprised by an off-the-radar  
independent? Anticipation plays  
a crucial role in your reaction to  
a movie. Rather than ignore it,  
we think it should be measured  
and acknowledged as part of the  
movie-going experience.

*Movie out of 5*

### **Enjoyment**

All other considerations, how did  
you feel for those two hours?  
Were you glued to your seat?  
Did the film speak to your soul?  
Was it inspiring, disappointing,  
or just plain boring? Were you  
entertained?

*Movie out of 5*

### **In Retrospect**

Over comes love with you,  
over those around wherever you  
go and the things they may shape  
the way you see the world. Did  
the movie follow up on what every  
moment seemed since your review?  
Was it a quick fix action flick, good  
for a rainy Sunday afternoon or  
the first day of the rest of your  
life? Did you lose it with a fury  
only to find it have with a passion?  
Or did that film have down away  
like a down of comment?

*Movie out of 5*

# **CHAPTER FOUR**

## **IN WHICH WE REVIEW THE LATEST FILM RELEASES**



## DIARY OF THE DEAD

REVIEWED  
MUCH T



**It's not lunchbox-peddling production designer George Lucas. Nor backstabbing Oscar-brother Steven Spielberg. Nor is it Francis Ford Coppola, the Hollywood virtuoso. Moze, the blood responsible for the most consistent franchise in film history — that's one per decade since 1968 and no duders — is author of the undead, George A. Romero.**

Rebooting his own less bleak In the Guerilla Techniques that informed Right of the Living Dead, Romero's latest is a breathless movie-within-a-movie shot by an obsessive documentarian (Joshua Close) and assembled student clowns, and edited by his twinkly girlfriend (Mathilde Morgan). "I'm hoping to scare you," explains Moze, sounding like Benh Conner's special-school wiz: "so maybe you'll wake up."

As the zombie apocalypse rages around them, and the team make portentous pilgrimages to lonely homes now crawling with stalkers, Diary achieves at this and more. Close's halely, first-person footage brings us a consistent live feed of the carnage because, he reasons, in this world of spin and surveillance, "if it doesn't happen on camera, it doesn't happen."

Confronting the disease of each new one like a nifty old witch doctor, Romero doesn't just want to baffle the collective brain; he wants to make us think. To this end, he employs the sort of hamster-headed satire beloved of Michael Moore: ignorant racial inequality, the rubber-necking media culture and humanely monstrous — the electrical resurrection doctors used to instant hearts.

His muckraking wit is equally in evidence. In Diary's funniest sequences we meet a deaf, dysrhythmic-wielding Amish chap who's a shoe-in for census of the year and an infected child's coven whose nose is red for all the wrong reasons.

Pittsburgh's pre-eminent professor of splatology even finds time to have a pop at pretenders to the throne such as 28 Days Later, a fine-but-blaired genre movie that had the temerity to make its protagonist run. "Dead things don't move fast; their smiles would snap," shames Close. Romero should know. After 40 years messing with things that go bump in the Night/Day/Dog, King George renders the original and best. *Men Graw!*

**Participation** — the Blair Witch Project — with audience. **Fun** Enjoyment — Avoiding fear, confusion — with creativity. **Pain** In Retrospect. Considered Statement — with audience. **Score**



**YOU THE LIVING**

RELEASED  
March 05

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**Taking the form of**  
a loosely-linked succession  
of comic tableaux with a strain  
of humour that's as dry as a salt  
mine, the opening 30 minutes  
of Roy Andersson's *You, The  
Living* hint that you may be  
about to witness the most  
hilarious film ever made. An  
over-emotional woman dumps  
her boyfriend on a park bench  
only to be quickly coaxed back  
with the promise of some royal  
wed; an elderly man doesn't  
realise that his dog has been  
tangled up in its leash; a tuba  
player at an instrument in song  
that he can't hear his wife  
screaming. Effortlessly locating  
moments of the sublime in the  
agonising concept of existence, it's  
like some silent-movie sketch show  
they've been mysteriously remixed  
from the addendum of the earth.

But, just as we're about to  
hit the point where our chest  
muscles collapse with laughter  
the jokes despatch and the film  
shifts into something subtler  
and more moody embroiling  
an altogether more sombre tone  
to tell its myriad tales of loss,  
yearning, of sorrow, of elation  
and of pain.

Thematically it's a sequel  
of sorts to the director's darker  
2002 film *Song for the Second  
Floor*, Manne's extracting and  
scrutinising the perverse and  
indolent moments that have

just beneath the surface of life.  
Working with a fixed camera  
and a visit-en-scene that seems  
to be in itself to the extreme  
berger Andersson – an ed-men  
by trade – generally leaves it to  
dramatic inertia to send feelings  
leaping from the screen.

Tonally, though, it's a  
difficult film to pigeonhole,  
a master that ends up being  
one of its key strengths and  
weaknesses. Andersson urges  
us to follow the comic and  
the tragic in every mouthful,  
and though he more often than not  
gets the balance just right, there  
are cases that leave a strange  
acid taste in the mouth.

Still, *Item of Art*

Kaurismäki's ultra-deliberate  
composition and poker-faced  
dialogue delivery will find much  
to admire. For those who don't  
really care for Nordin yet, you are  
urged to make it through to the  
final shot, which is one of the  
most beautiful and enigmatic in  
recent cinema, away spring.

**Anticipation.** A Swedish  
comedy? Hell, okay. Fine.

**Hopscotch:** The spending  
is pure comedy gold. Four

**In Retrospect:** You'd  
spike the masterpiece at  
this point up to, but  
you like going for it. You

**Aki Kaurismäki finally has  
some serious competition  
as Scandinavia's master of  
darkly droll comedy. Step  
forward Roy Andersson...**

**LWLive: How would you describe your style?**

**Andersson:** My philosophy is to create pictures that are witty, very clean, purified, condensed and easy to see – almost close to certain. I would say like Matisse, the French painter, I take away everything that is not necessary for the picture.

**LWLive: Clean and pure lines – that's a very Swedish philosophy. Is there something uniquely Swedish about your work would you say?**

**Andersson:** No, I don't hope so because I want to be universal.

**LWLive: But You, The Living has a very specific sense of place, from the architecture to the light.**

**Andersson:** I want to have a so-called woodchance colour palette – not too strong colours and not too strong a contrast because that is irritating to me there is more intensity, in my opinion, when you create a picture with not too much contrast, monochromatic colours. I make lighter than how nature makes because I want light where people won't look – light without saying.

**LWLive: Why have you resisted the lure of the feature film?**

**Andersson:** My first feature was a fabulous success, and my second, *Ullberg*, was a fabulous fail. It cost a lot of money – more than budget – so I was made a nonperson and I was out on the road. For many years in Sweden, among the professionals,

**LWLive: So it was not so much that you didn't want to make features as you weren't able to?**

**Andersson:** I couldn't work, yes. I couldn't work. It was a very hard period, and the only people that called me were advertising people as I started to make commercials and it was a very big success. But my personal art commercials was much longer than I had thought.

**LWLive: Do you hold grudges against the people who stopped you from making features? Does it make you angry?**

**Andersson:** No, I'm not angry. Now I almost feel guilty for them. But there was a period when I was very, very angry at myself because I had a hard time professionally also. I mean, I had two small children and no salary so it was a hard time, yes.

**LWLive: Sweden obviously lost its most famous director in Ingmar Bergman last year. What are your personal memories of him? How badly will he be missed?**

**Andersson:** In my opinion he's a little overrated. In the beginning of the '80s I think there were four writers that are excellent, but there are so many bad movies he made. And he was also very right politically. He was always a feminist. He was a total egalitarian, and when he grew up he never left that himself, and it influenced his person. He was not a nice person. Matt Reesberg.



## OUT OF THE BLUE

REVIEWED BY  
ROBERT MORTON

**On November 13 1990**, Gervil Gray shot and killed 13 people in the small town of Aranui, New Zealand. It remains the worst mass murder in the country's history. *Out of the Blue* (interestingly) reconstructs the residue of that day from Gray's home and possessions, its police photographs, phone calls and even CCTV footage.

It starts slowly. At pains to establish its realism and the mundanity of life before the massacre, the film succumbs to over-scripting and is a trifle of theatricality among its semi-professional cast members. With the introduction of Gray

(Matthew Sunderland), however, that early realism is offset by flashes of cinematic trickery. Abstract framing, opaque lenses and unsettling soundscapes hint at Gray's inner turmoil but only succeed in muddying the sense – between the prosaic town and its famous凶ous – between 'us' and 'him'.

Apart from fleeting moments of humanity, Gray remains a mystery. While director Robert Bates has said he was interested in the case because Gray, who lived in the town, was not an 'outsider', he is presented as a misfit, a figure of suspicion, an outsider in all but body. The

cinematic flourishes hence seem all the more inappropriate, suggesting narrative certainty when so much is unknown.

Otherwise, the film has much that is excellent. Its attention to detail and sensitivity are admirable, and there are some fine performances which capture the undivided focus of the policemen pitched into chaos. Most importantly, Matthew Sunderland's depiction of Gray is convincing and committed.

While the film is a superb reconstruction, the question remains as to what it is 'for'. The cautious, meticulous dramatization of real tragedy remains best suited to TV or

with the BBC's *The Huntingdon Massacre* or Paul Greengrass' *Bloody Sunday*. Cinema, purveying entertainment, sometimes education and *Out of the Blue*, for all its technical brilliance, falls slightly short on both counts. James Runcie

**Anticipation** **Four**  
Realism. Mass murder. True story. Colby Stone

**Enjoyment** **Three**  
The detailed reconstruction of events is impressive, and some fine performances. True

**In Retrospect**  
Compelling but dated. True

## WATER LILIES

RELEASED  
MARCH 14



### Reactions to Water Lilies

Likes me? Why to be split into two camps. For women, this is an unerring portrayal of a world of faded beauty, schoolgirl crushes and the weight of expectation. To men, this film about young teenage girls discovering their sexuality is an uncomfortable glimpse into a hidden and forbidden world.

In a small French suburb, Marie (Pauline Ducruet) delivers her chubby friend Anne (Louise Bourgoin) to the swimming Piscine (Adèle Haenel), star of the girls' synchronised swimming team and focus of the school's rumour mill. Here the unfurling of their various ambitions, an uneasy middle ground between finding love and losing one's virginity is brutally revealed.

There's nothing salacious

about *Water Lilies*, but writer/director Céline Sciamma's debut is unerringly honest; she bluntly focuses on young teens' sight from the start as it forces viewers down adults' barely feather – certainly none of the girls' parents – and white. Sciamma's point may be that these young people are finding themselves; we might want to know more about the sexual subtext beyond these conclusions of the "First One," the "Bluff" and the "Accident Lover." Or perhaps her point is that these are the very ideals which adult society would pin on these girls, but which they are either young or naive enough not to trade in themselves. This unshameful view is underlined by the brutalist camerawork, which enjoys nighttime scenes and pitching the



girls in water-bound marsh bogs.

Look somewhere between *A Mi Amor* and *Show Me Love*. *Water Lilies* misses the wit of the latter, or the hindsight of the former's fascinating, however, to use Aquatique nature on screen, while Haenel gets younger looks out of the burden of her beauty in briefly. *Water Lilies*

is as the film looks. Fair

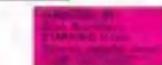
Enjoyment... contains insight into a world of tidal fears and sexual awakening. Fine

IN RETROSPECT... Looking in retrospect, look a promising example of young French talent in front of and behind the camera. Fine

Anticipation... *Exodus*

## MARGOT AT THE WEDDING

RELEASED  
February 20



### It's got it all - wobbly

cameras, uncutted hair, overstated understandent 1970s snowflake patterned knitwear – Noah Baumbach's *Margot at the Wedding* has all the free-dates guaranteed to make both itch and skin crawl. Add to that the kind of familial dysfunction and insidious psychological torture that you can all get for free from a big back horse, and it seems that this is a film certain to have you poking out your own eyeballs in irritation. And yet somehow it doesn't. Instead, it's compelling and affecting, and the gravity home-route looks reassures it all feel predictably real.

The film follows the kind of family breakdown that made Baumbach's *The Squid and the Whale* such a success. Neurotic writer Margot (Nicole Kidman)

tucks up just days before the wedding of her estranged sister, Pauline (Jennifer Jason Leigh). Taking an instant dislike to Pauline's fiance Malcolm (Jack Black), a failed musician and unemployed artist, Margot's compulsive interference sets off a chain of events that sends the already fragile family into emotional collapse.

What really raises the film from bland to brilliant are the performances. Kidman stands out as the brittle, hypercritical Margot with a turn that hauls back to her glory days of *Noir* and proves that no one does neuritic, precipitous despair quite so prettily as she does. Jack Black is almost a revelation, succumbing only once or twice to the eye-rolling overacting he's



taken and tolerated for.

Magnetic, subtly tragic and ultimately sympathetic, *Margot at the Wedding* is worth a watch – if only to remind yourself why you don't go home for Christmas anymore. *Laura Solman*

Anticipation... Fair

Enjoyment... When you're passing *House of Cards*, you know that things are going well. Fair

IN RETROSPECT... While *House of Cards*' comfortable milieu, no love's not yet been tested. Fine



***REDACTED***

REVIEWED  
March 14



## One more great

Movies is all it would take to enthrall Brian De Palma in the partition of world-leading modern American directors. While 2006's handsome if spineless *James Bond* notes, *The Black Dahlia*, felt a little too much like he was resting on his past rod-gangster laurels, the very least you can say of *Redacted* is that he's wrong footed the obituary writers by honing his craft down to a fine (stunt, never) point.

Rabidious and scattershot, this bile-filled Iraq war drama takes a US military checkpoint as its focus and documents the daily grind of some whoop-it-holler Marines who, after one of their superiors has his leg blown off by a rogue landmine, decide to take bloody revenge on a

random, perhaps innocent, group of Iraqi locals.

Using footage from the cameras of plucky Private Angel Silesar (Jzy Dreyfus) as its narrative driving force, the film then takes a look at key events from the perspective of Arabic news networks, CCTV and others higher up the chain of command. This in turn reveals *Redacted*-style – the different ways it 'happens' can be construed when examined by different parties, but more than that, exposes the different forms of media (and how they are both exploited and enhanced) that are now used to bring war to a wider audience.

While many may not share to the fact that it's a film that shouts out, 'Hey kids, I'm a low-B-DV experiment!', if looked at from

the right angles *Redacted* actually has a lot to say about the idealism and the paradoxical ethics of warfare, and how it can warp and brutalise the character of even the most meek and mild of men.

De Palma is not a director you often see lecturing from a soapbox, so a second-half rally of pacifism can be forgivably forgotten but there are some other problems. The 'acting' is a little theatrical in a film that would have benefitted from a more naturalistic edge. And on that point De Palma attempts to replicate those different media are wholly disastrous. European TV is made to look like a noisily round-the-clock infomercial for Florida rest homes, and the CCTV footage mysteriously comes with sound

if it's passive and objectivity you want, head for Matt Damon's *Battle for Haditha*. *Redacted* is a film with dirt under its fingernails, and it's not ashamed to hold 'em up to the light. *James Bond*

**Anticipation** – they know all the answers when it comes to war, because they know each other's strengths. These

**Enjoyment** – undoubtedly one of those 'more interesting than engagable' films, but unlikely to ever be a popcorn wiggler. These

**In Retrospect** – a very easy film to dismiss, but there is more to it than meets the eye. Paul



## FUNNY GAMES

REVIEW  
April 4

### Michael Haneke is

an audience-hater, a bourgeoisie-hater, a cinematic terrorist. Fear is his weapon – of the unknown, the unthinkable, the cold capacity of life to roll over each and every one of us with death ultime dissipation.

Hated, *Funny Games*, right as will come with a flashing neon sign that bounces "Fuck You!" at the audience. From the minute the binding tones of open, in the opening credits, are usurped by a hammering wall of heavy metal, he sets about systematically uninviting the viewer, just as Anna, George and their son are tormented by home invaders. They at least, will eventually be put out of their misery. We, on the other hand, will be left to stare.

Anybody with even a passing interest in Haneke's films will know that Anna (Naomi Watts) and George (Tim Roth) are in trouble from the moment we see their sporty Range Rover, swervy pad and spotless lives. They're

exactly the kind of.aspiderid WADPs he skewered in *Hideous*, and here again they're about to get a wake-up call they'll never forget. It comes in the shape of 'Peter' and 'Paul' (Jérémie Renier and Michael Pitt) two terribly ordinary boys who go to demonstrate a capacity for extraordinary cruelty.

In an era of endless property shows and a house price obsession, there's a delicious treason in watching the walls of somebody's castle crumble around them as George and Anna witness the full extent of what they're in for. But what begins as exquisite torture quickly becomes something else altogether as Haneke reveals that he has no respect for the moral limits of human behaviour.

And – thrillingly outrageously – no respect for the boundaries of cinema. One particular scene will have audiences shivering: "It's not fair," they'll say. "You can't do

that!" And they'll be right – by all respectable conventions you can't. "But why?" asks Haneke coolly and calmly. Aren't we tired of soulless blockbusters and genre formula? Well, he's going to rip up the rubrics and start again. Always one step ahead of the audience, he dares us to be outraged because it exposes our fear. The truth is, we don't know how to react anymore when somebody so brutally invades our everyday issues.

The dirty nihilism is devastating. And more so for the fact that it's a reminder – on repeat, shot-for-shot instead of a film. Haneke has already made before in German. It adds another layer of galling provocation, of sensational sensationalism that bites and graws at us, challenging the audience either to find some moral wisdom for his macabre or simply accept that there doesn't need to be one. And that, right there, is the point. In the

Nirvana scene, Peter tells Paul of his theory about the universe. Fiction, he says, is as real as reality. False is true, black is white, and Michael Haneke has produced a startling attack on the lazy passivity of cinema that's as difficult to watch as it is to forget. **Neil Reynolds**

**Anticipation** Why would he make an exact replica of an earlier film? **He**

**Enjoyment** It's a brutal, bracing sort of everything you think you knew about cinema. **He**

**In Retrospect** It might be a remake but... paradoxically, that's a unique statement about the power of cinema, and a dramatic challenge to conventional film.

See page 88 for some pre-previews with Michael Pitt.

## FLIGHT OF THE RED BALLOON

RELEASED  
March 14

Making his directorial name with a series of expressive hyper-complex social fictions such as *A City of God* and *The Puppets Master*, Hugo Haas-Haas's films have often been works to admire rather than enjoy. With his whimsical, lighter-than-air meta-fictional *In-zero-gravity Flight of the Red Balloon*, he delicately tips the balance in favour of the latter, producing one of his most direct, moving and descriptively simple films to date.

Revolving around his native Vienna to the sounds of Paris with a nod to Albert Lamorisse's 1956 *L'Homme et le Balloon Rouge* under his arm, this charming slice-of-life drama dips its toe into the hectic, urban liturgies of the upwardly

mobile middle-class, and is taken mostly from the perspective of the titular balloon. A involuntary turn by Juliette Binoche (some might argue her best ever screen performance) as a retired wife and mother attempting to conduct a long-distance relationship in the glue that binds together various sub-strands involving her young son's piano lessons, her new live-in nanny (who, in a flourish of emblematic self-deception, is herself making a UK homage to Lamorisse's film) and her dry job as a puppeteer. As with Hou's previous films, *Flight* recognises that real life rarely caters for the neat narrative arcs that cinema so often demands. Instead, we



are offered the basic elements of a drama, which we are invited to assemble in our own minds.

With its dazzling gold and red cinematography, the film is at once a statement on the nature of cinematic artifice (at one point, we are even shown the drifting balloon being controlled by a man with a fishing rod) and a poignant dissection of cloistered inner-city living. The final shot, too, is an absolute doozy: *au revoir*.

Anticipation: Hugo Haas-Haas director; *Flight*; No. 11, June issue of *that's Film*

Enjoyment: simply enchanting. *Four*

In Retrospect: one of a kind; the film is nothing less than a triumph for you to scratch your own damn back. *Four*

## CHILDREN OF GLORY

RELEASED  
March 14

### This may be a film

about Hungary shot in the Hungarian language but it's an American as apple pie cooked by Michael Bay and served by Steven Spielberg. And why not? Hollywood was built by Hungarians. Even Botaz had one – Alexander Korda, the producer of *The Third Man* and *The Red Shoes*. However the Hungarians have never had a Hollywood blockbuster of their own, so who can blame them for having a go?

A lightly-filmed account of the Hungarian uprising of 1956, *Children of Glory* follows the national water polo team as it prepares for the Melbourne Olympics against the backdrop of a brutal Soviet regime. As the young of Budapest begin to rebel, the team's best players must decide whether to fall in line on the Soviets on the streets, or take on the world in the swimming pool. *Children of Glory* is the brainchild of Oscar-nominated writer

Joe Eszterhas and Andrew Weisz, the Hungary-born producer of the *Rambo* movies, and their Hollywood pedigree informs the film at every level. Its hero is a smug-looking sports star who, against all the odds, falls in love with a beautiful actress. Swimming with ribonkabib pride, our smirking jock becomes a smirking revolutionary to the swelling strains of an orchestra score.

No cliché is left unturned, be it the childhood friend whose untimely death informs our hero's political consciousness. The adorable little brother who unwittingly gets in hero's way or the rousing speech given by the coach before the climactic game. In spite of all this, it's hard not to like *Children of Glory*, at least initially. Notwithstanding some extremely dodgy CGI, the battle scenes on Hungary's streets are handled with verve, while the water polo games are well-directed and



exciting. And for the British viewer for whom one Cold War uprising could be interchangeable with all the others, the story is an original one that both grasps the imagination and feels (whisper it) somewhat educational at the same time. The only shame is that it doesn't attempt to fit into the emerging Hungarian canon of directors like Bela Tarr and Kornelos Antal instead of taking its cues from Gary Marshall and Ron Howard. *One*

Anticipation: hopefully Hungarian film + soundtrack, rather than the shoddyfied *Retrospect* film. *Three*

Enjoyment: More like a Hungarian *Friedkin* masterpiece. *Three*

In Retrospect: *EE* nothing else, but probably the best water polo film ever made. *Three*



## THE ORPHANAGE

RELEASED March 21

**Like abattoirs and sexual health clinics, orphanages tend to get a bad rep when it comes to cinematic P.R. All three provide a valuable public service, but do the world's filmmakers acknowledge the fact? Oh no. Instead, such places are used as the setting for gory horror flicks, rippling into our collective fear of death, isolation and woefully inadequate social care.**

Juan Antonio Bayona's *The Orphanage* doesn't buck the trend, but the whole endeavour is carried off with such rawness and genuine fear that few will have grounds for complaint. It's a horror film, certainly, but one that plucks stock in the horrific ingredients of classic ghost stories - atmosphere, flawed characters and a relentless wave of growing sadness. After surviving the moist glut of drill-to-fitter torture intact, these softball bodies sound positively benign – yet the end result is anything but.

The plot recalls several of Daphne du Maurier's suspense tales, focusing on a young woman haunted by shadows of her past – quite literally, as events transpire Laura (Belén Rueda) returns to the remote orphanage of her youth, aiming to open a home for sick children. Her first charge is her adopted son Simon, a sweet little boy who has yet to be informed of his HIV infection. But Simon has issues stretching beyond his illness, namely a tendency to play with imaginary friends who may not be there. "Zoinks!" an

Snoopy-Doo might say.

It sounds predictable and made from a couple of sophomore shocks it is – until the story takes a surprise turn for lonelier ground in the film's latter half. Laura becomes increasingly fixated by the trauma that surrounds her, and Bayona toys with the notion that everything could be taking place inside her damaged mind. This shrewd ambiguity is punctuated even throughout the title – *orphanage* – a name standing in silence in the dark – and the net result is a deeply freaky ride for sceptics and believers alike.

With Guillermo del Toro serving as producer, *The Orphanage* was always destined for a certain level of quality. While it would be foolish to discount the influence of The Devil's Backbone director, however, Bayona has shown huge potential with his first time in the chair. When a delirious mix the triply blend of marred child and bedtime fears you know it's time to pay attention. *Keep Kelly*

**AMBIENT TERRIFYING...** the words "willows will blow" always bring willow trees to the sole of parishes. *Not*

**ISOLATION...** *Suppose...* those who suffered spastic kids are handled with aplomb. *Four*

**In Retrospect...** *Isabel,* and *thought provoking* is best. *Two.* *Poor*

**LWJes chats to producer Guillermo del Toro about ghosts, soul-eating monsters and the freaky powers of children.**

**LWJes:** Aside from the presence of AIDS within the plot, *The Orphanage* feels like a classic ghost story. What influences went into the making of the film?

**del Toro:** The main idea I had when you talk to [co-writer] Belén Rueda and [co-writer] Juan Antonio Bayona, they have different answers. Bayona is truly a film buff and can talk forever about early films from Robert Rossen's *The Hustler* to Jack Clayton's *The Damned*, whereas Rueda is less the kind of guy to reference films that he's seen. You can certainly see it as a work in the lineage of classic ghost stories.

**LWJes:** This is Juan Antonio Bayona's first full-length film. What drew you to working with him?

**del Toro:** His short films showed a lot of talent and potential, and thought it would be good to help him get everything he needed. You have test features, when you are making a film for the first time, you feel that people around feel they should pursue you by giving you as little as possible. You have these share-narrated organisations who say, "What does he want?" It's in their best interests!, and then you have to be super-aggressive. I felt that Antonio was on the verge of not being able to tell the story the way it needed to be, so I thought, "Why not? Let's go to Seattle, get him what he needs!"

**LWJes:** As with *The Devil's Backbone*, *The Orphanage* features an abundance of creepy children. What is it about kids that makes them so damn scary?

**del Toro:** I think that, as entities, they almost act as placeholders between the world we know and accept as real, and the world of possibility – both bad and good. They always act as partial children, allow the magic to happen, and they become a very powerful avatars for audiences suspending their disbelief. At the same time, child characters are capable of experiencing the brutal and the sublime in a much more intense way than adults.

**LWJes:** *The Orphanage* is quite subtle in the way it delivers its scares and is all the more disturbing for it. In the US, torture and extreme violence are the current themes du jour. What do you make of that?

**del Toro:** That is one area of horror that has always existed – you can really trace it all the way back to the original stages of theatre. It's frankly a necessary component of the genre, because the genre needs to remain macabre, macabre and macabre. But, I do think that's very symptomatic that American horror seems to be more concerned with the destruction of the body, whereas European horror is traditionally more concerned with the destruction of the soul. There are horrors that originate not from the fear of being eaten, but from looking who you are, your questions. That may come from an older model of European film, and the literary horror tradition. *Keep Kelly*

# LARS AND THE REAL GIRL

RELEASED  
MARCH 21

**This film shouldn't work.** On paper, the idea of asking an audience to watch a serious film about a relatively tame (but embattled) love story is a losing relationship with a sex doll and having his whole town go along with the fantasy has 'Troll' written all over it in capitals. However, like the bumblebee, Lars and the Real Girl flies - it's just difficult to see how.

Ryan Reynolds plays Lars, a lover in a small town kind of his privacy. Seemingly on a whim he purchases a "Real Doll" and introduces her to the town on his new - male, disabled - girlfriend. A half-Brazilian missionary he met on the internet. The whole town embraces "Bianca" and treats her like a real person as Lars comes

to terms with his life and resolves the mental conflicts that get him here in the first place. Key to the magic act is the fact that there is never the hint of anything sordid in Lars' relationship with Bianca - this is simply another lost soul looking for nothing more than friendship in his inaneate girlfriend.

Reynolds is highly impressive, playing Lars with a distant confusion and only ever hinting at the impulses that have driven him to this bizarre juncture. But Kelli Garner as his actual would-be-girlfriend is fantastic. Both geeky and endearing in a childlike way, her character carries the best elements of Lars throughout the film and does much to inconspicuously endear him to

the audience. Bremerton, Paul Schneider and Emily Mortimer as Lars' brother and sister-in-law are well cast in sensible but sensitive roles.

The issue of small-town life and a community bonding together is slightly smoochey but touching nonetheless. Indeed, that's the really remarkable thing about *Lars and the Real Girl* - it works despite having every reason not to, for which director Craig Gillespie deserves credit for handling the story in a subtle and non-controversial style.

So it's impressive, yes, but perhaps the end result is less groundbreaking than hoped for. At its heart, *Lars* is a romantic comedy about growing up and

the value of friendship. But beyond its unique premise, its little more than an above-average rom-com. Ironically, the one thing lacking is the greater sense of realism that would have elevated the film to the cult status it's striving for (another titleless)

## Anticipation...

Look off a bucket of popcorn. See the one will continue, but without much speed. See

Enjoyment: no not at all. This is an year as the drama since *Four*

## In Retrospect...

Sweet and honest, but not much more. These





## I'M A CYBORG

RELEASED 12/14

**Park Chan-wook is**  
fast becoming Asia's answer to David Fincher: a director whose dynamic technical skills are matched only by his subversive sense of humour. After the explosive 'Vengeance Trilogy', he returns with *I'm A Cyborg*. In character, he has need to blow off some steam and goof around with his new HD Viper cameras. But although the result is darkly oddball, it's no throwaway vanity fest.

Young-goon is a 'cyborg' who takes orders from an educational radio station and confides in a coffee machine. She lives naturally in an insane

asylum populated by a cuckoo's nest of comic misfits, including a man who can only state the obvious ('I'm not a... above all... a fury animal') and a woman who believes she can fly. But her presence will have a transformative effect on those around her, especially Il-sun, a telepathic who fears he will one day disappear; it is Il-sun who must save Young-goon from herself as the young girl is in danger of starving to death. Cyborgs, you see, can't digest human food.

Shot in lovely pastel colours and shades of dappled sunlight augmented by subtle shots of

DGA, there's a touch of Michel Gondry in the whimsical inventiveness of Park's film. It counts (and sometimes fails) on the shimmering performance of Lim Soo-jung as Young-goon, whose remarkable physical appearance does much to invest the film with its unique écheance.

If at times it straddles mental illness in a little too close to laughing 'er' rather than 'er', then there's still something heartfelt about the love that blossoms in the most unlikely of circumstances. And who else but Park Chan-wook could find time in the middle of this inventive magic to stage a scene

of mass murder? He continues to be one of world cinema's most idiosyncratic and exciting talents. **Matt Reeshead**

**Anticipation**  
As long as he keeps making them, we'll keep tuning up. **Fear**

**Enjoyment** A sleek, funny short blossoms into a bittersweet oddity. **Taste**

**IN RETROSPECT**  
Not the most Park masterpiece, but it'll one-ups them.

## SHINE A LIGHT

RELEASED APRIL 11



**The Last Waltz, Martin Scorsese's rockumentary about The Band's final concert, has been reappreciated as one of the most iconic rock films of all time. As Director House, his documentary on Bob Dylan, provided insight into one of the most elusive of stars, and coincided with a moment when his mercurial public image and almost obsessive evasion of cultish bandwagons were a powerful counterpoint to shelves of celebrity and cults with talent.**

What, then, is the point of *Shine a Light*? Scorsese's record of a Rolling Stones' gig at New York's Beacon Theatre? Does it mark a moment of musical history? No. The concert itself, though actually filmed across two live events, was to mark Bill Clinton's eighth birthday. Clinton himself introduces the band, but that is a defining moment in rock 'n' roll history: it's a funeral. Does it capture a band at their

peak? Obviously not. The music itself is good, but not great. Is it a documentary about the history of The Rolling Stones? No. The film consists almost entirely of concert footage peppered with occasional archive interviews. The burst of backstory is slipped through with little purpose, and if you don't know that Mick Jagger was once arrested for possessing weed, then you probably won't be seeing the film anyway.

Is it a directional tour de force? No. Scorsese serves on screen as bookend, the film, but no light is his touch that it were not for the physical proof of his presence, it would be easy to wonder whether he was there at all. That doesn't mean he does a bad job – one of the faults with *The Last Waltz* is that it is 'too directed', approaching the show as a theatre rather than concert. Here Scorsese lets himself to getting the cameras down among the (surprisingly talkative) crowd.



To adopt the appropriately reverential angle on his subjects, aided by the occasional close-up,

if *Shine a Light* has a theme, it is simply about a great band who decided to just keep on going. The interviews repeatedly return to the topic of age and how long the Stones will last. That age is evidenced by crackling voices, crackling prose, and self-deprecating humour. All of this makes their energy and commitment something harrowing and beautiful, well worthy of cinema. But that story, those

images, are like the band itself: well worn. The very thing the film feels to do is shining a light, *aswee bumblee*.

### Anticipation

Marc Krasowitz and Eric Stasheff: *Rock*

**Enjoyment... It really is only rock 'n' roll. There**

**In Retrospect... You can't always get what you want... The**

## THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL

RELEASED MAY 1

We've been stuffed full of Tudors in the last 12 months: there was Anne-Marie Duff as the young Elizabeth; Mirren as the old; Blanchett as she who must be obeyed on screen; and Rhys Ifans as he who must be obeyed in the bedroom. Now: these Boleyns. Where to differentiate them?

The matricide argument is the film's only interest: the two actresses who have the potency. As mother to the Boleyn sisters, Anne (Natalie Portman) and Mary (Scarlett Johansson), Kristen Scott Thomas embodies a woman at

once powerful, and yet powerless to prevent her daughters reducing the long ethereal love (Mary) or leverage (Anne). All are equal and though of course they're punished for their transgressions, the production of Elizabeth I is an early result for feminism.

For their part, the men are less because Eric Bana is abundant as Henry, despite the broadened shoulders, while Peter Morgan's noseplay is, like The Queen, just a TV soap in disguise. The edit is just as patchy – history absurdly condensed. So between the colloquial and the perched,



it is left to the visuals to achieve a heavy-weight feel. Thus *The Other Boleyn Girl* is worth it for the women and the odd odd painting, but nothing beyond both looks flimsy.

**Anticipation... The**

**Enjoyment... need to see the girls spiking the novelty value, but still average... The**

**In Retrospect... David's enhanced greatness but disappointed... The**



## MISTER LONELY

RELEASER  
March 14



### Maybe it's because

he was barely 18 when he wrote *Larry Clark's Kids*, or the fact that he hangs out with David Byrne. Or maybe it's just that his trousers are too biggy. Whatever the reason, some people still think Harmony Korine is a chapter. *Mister Lonely*: a whimsical fable about a Michael Jackson impersonator and some skydiving nuns, does little to try and convince the doubters otherwise, but for those willing to accept Korine's work on its own terms, it's a brilliantly bonkers triumph.

Diego Luna plays a bittersweet basement Michael Jackson impersonator, eking out a living in Paris. He meets 'Marilyn Monroe' (Juliette Binoche) during a gig

at an old people's home, and she persuades him to return with her to a commune in the South African Highlands. There they join other celebrity impersonators in tending sheep and rehearsing for a variety show. Meanwhile, somewhere in Latin America, Werner Herzog and the aforementioned nuns are riding motorbikes through the sky, elevated by felt alone. 'Told you it was brilliant.'

Parado-philosophical voiceover aside, *Mister Lonely* is a much more joyful, genial work than either *Julien Donkey-Boy* or *Saint Laurent*. It gives the audience permission to laugh, which is lucky, because when you fail to decipher the symbolism of a talking boiled egg, that's about all you'll have to fall back on.

Otherwise, Diego Luna's dancing is the catch-thrilling, moon-walking stuff of Sir Michael Jackson legend, and James Fox is comic genius as the Pope with personal hygiene issues. 'I do bathe,' he pants deferentially at one point, 'I just don't use soap.' This is not a film incidentally, for devout Catholic

— Is it exploitative to laugh at the deacons? Well, yes. But once you've caught your breath there's something else to admire — their balls-out boldness. And therein lies the best thing about *Mister Lonely*. It's a film about people who refuse to let anything spoil the fun and, unburdened by that, they achieve incredible things. They moonwalk to perfection, skydive without parachutes — and some of

them, of course, even make movies. *Elon James*

**Anticipation** A contrarian director and a bizarre storyline suggests an intriguing progression. *There*

**Enjoyment** It may be a case of the Kapoor's new clothes, but we certainly look good naked. *Four*

**In Retrospect** In a choice between traditional and safe or experimental and flawed, opt for the latter every time. *Four*

Page 86 is the place to check in for a Harmony Korine interview.

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REVIEW  
ADRIENNE

**An innovative and charming British comedy.** *Son of Rambow* is a decent film that has had the good fortune to uncover Bill Milner's exuberant actor whose innocence, vulnerability and memory moustache leap off the screen. Milner plays Will, a 10-year-old boy whose father died while moving the team and whose resilience upstages as a member of the Plymouth Brethren has led him to retreat into his own solitary world of colourful drawings and fantastical stories. A chance encounter with the wayward Lee Carter leads to him watching a pirated copy of *Rambo: First Blood* and with his imagination fired, the two set out to make their own home-made version of Stallone's post-War classic.

At its best, *Son of Rambow* is a raucous mix of boyish banter – the gung-ho excesses of *Rambo* mixed with Will's quirkily semi-fantastic childhood of cartoons, worms and secret adventures, while the boys' school is a place of tall girls with big hair and short skirts. The boys are at the heart of the film but there are likeable adult performances, particularly by Paul Rider as a geography teacher whose bored lessons are come-on and arrogant views are brilliantly developed. A tone of knockabout fun is set from the opening credits, which feature a rampaging soundtrack and a series of front-gardenia tableau, complete with Stallone, Willmenn and a Ford Capri to stoke up the nostalgia

and set the early '80s scene. The film doesn't maintain this early pace throughout, and occasionally wanders off track as it sets up and attempts to resolve too many plot points, but Milner's natural charm helps to ensure that it doesn't go too far wrong and the result is an original and endearing British comedy. Steve Neale

ANATOLE DE LA FUENTE - *Kids*  
et *Adults* from Sunshine



and a refreshingly different approach. Few

Enjoyment - *Novel*  
*eccentricities* too and a *nostalgic* tale. *Three*

IN RETROSPECT - *Set*  
*the classics as might*  
*have been, but here a*  
*looking forward to*  
*seeing what Bill Milner*  
*does next. *Three**

REVIEW  
ADRIENNE

**Cannibal Holocaust**  
and *The Blair Witch Project* may have set the ball rolling, but it was the terrors of *U/T1*, recorded live by amateurs, that made *reportage* the vehicle of choice for today's horror films. From *Dawn of the Dead* to *Cloverfield* to any number of lower-budget true-story thrillers. The events of Jerome Belangioi and Poco Pianchi's [REC] similarly purport to be raw documentary footage – and in case anyone misses the connection between contemporary audiences and the film's handheld medium, [REC]'s disaster scenario sees a two-person television crew following Bremer into a building...

Documenting the humdrum working lives of a local firemen, reporter Ángela (Manuela Velasco)

and her unseen cameraman Pepe ride along on what ought to be a routine trip to help an elderly woman out of her locked apartment, only to find themselves trapped in the building with an insectoid invader spreading rapidly through the small population of residents, and with security forces outside preventing any escape. Armed only with their cameras, the two will bear witness to an unfolding apocalypse that they cannot stop – and cannot stop filming.

[REC] wears its debt to *Night of the Living Dead*, *The Blair Witch Project* and *The Exorcist* on its bloody sleeve, but these are recombined into something quite original and more importantly, terrifying. While the film idles dreamingly through

its initial scenes, from about a third of the way into its extremely 80-minute duration viewers are awoken into a shik-yak nightmare that escalates with each floor climbed by the hysterical survivors; until in near-total darkness, we reach a twisted ending that not even the most hardened gore fan will either see coming or watch unmoved. *Cult Arterial*.

Anticipation - *Two*  
*may be a case of *Aliens**

*likely, dark and bleak*  
*reportage approach to*  
*horrors just a cover for*  
*low-key production值. *Three**

Enjoyment - *Will*  
*be scared to pieces*  
*exactly how long you/we*  
*have persisted on the edge*  
*of your seats. *Four**

IN RETROSPECT:  
Similar to a hysterical pitch, and then just  
keeps on going. *Four*





## HAPPY-GO-LUCKY

RELEASED April 13

MOVIE  
REVIEW  
BY CLAUDIO NUÑEZ  
WITH ADAM COOPER

**Mike Leigh is now** such a polar of the British establishment that it's easy to forget just how divisive he used to be. Chief among the charges levelled by critics such as Pauline Kael was that his films were fundamentally unconcerned; that he had brought the theatrical baggage picked up at RADA, and the aesthetics of 17 years of TV drama, into the hollowed halls of cinema.

The sexism that has greeted Leigh's recent, more-commercial work (*Topsy-Turvy* and *Vera Drake*) is proof, however, that his characteristically off-kilter movies often less uncontroversial these days. If *Happy-Go-Lucky* makes them squirm, it will only be very gently.

The film is a pleasantly meandering story about a primary

school teacher Poppy (Sally Hawkins), and her relationships with friends, family and a lagged driving instructor (it's instantly recognisable as the work of Leigh by dint of its gently tragicomic sensibility, spiced female protagonists, family ridiculousness, and north London setting).

In addition, like much of his work, *Happy-Go-Lucky* is a defence of life for life's sake, but is notably lighter in touch than the likes of *Secrets and Lies* and *All or Nothing*. It will be seen as further proof of Leigh's increasingly assured status, which has been attributed to the demise of his wife, former Margaret Thatcher look-alike, Margaret Thatcherman. Maled was the last, famous shot at the Thatcherite wasteland.

However, while the issues of class that marked Leigh's more

political films are hardly present in *Happy-Go-Lucky*, it might still be seen as a direct response to the conformist pressures of Blairite meritocracy. In *Cinder Girls*, Leigh used the beginning of the house price boom to frame the relationship between two college housemates, meeting up again as apprehensive 30-somethings. In *Happy-Go-Lucky*, Poppy's solar arc achieved many of the comforts of domesticity – marriage, an interest in home furnishings, pregnancy – but is pointedly jealous of her sibling's freedom and contentment.

Ultimately though, just as *Topsy-Turvy* and *Vera Drake* were far from Hollywood fare, *Happy-Go-Lucky* is no *Play for Today*. Leigh consistently produces

work that defies the expectations of his critics, and *Happy-Go-Lucky* is best viewed in this vein, as neither thriller nor film, comedy or tragedy, but a light-hearted tribute to the carefree, from-a-farlookoe director Adam Events.

**Anticipation:** While *Drake* was Leigh's most accomplished film, how will he follow it?

**Enjoyment:** A light-hearted look at a free spirit, with ease, beauty and thought provoking moments. Three.

### In Retrospect

**Irreducibly Light-** hearted. **Happy-Go-Lucky:** Three.



## WE/les talks to the talented first-time director behind *We Are Together*, Paul Taylor.

LW/Lies How did you first become involved with the project?

Taylor: It was 2003 and I was a film student... on my summer break I went to volunteer in South Africa and ended up working at the Agape orphanage. I went without any intention of making a film, but it really engaged operating time with the kids and was really enthralled by their personalities. When I came back to continue film school, I started thinking it would make a great film, and I worked on writing to go back to South Africa so we went out the following year and started filming.

LW/Lies How old were you at this point?

Taylor: I think I was 21 when we started shooting.

LW/Lies How did you get such high-profile editors and composers on board?

Taylor: Right at the beginning we said that we were going to donate all the profits from the film, so we were able to get a lot of people who we normally wouldn't be able to afford to very kindly come and do it much cheaper.

LW/Lies So you went straight from film school to shooting tons of events. Was it overwhelming, or did you know the film was special?

Taylor: I've been packing myself every step of the way. It's just snowballed — we had no idea at the start to take off in that way. Obviously we loved the kids and thought there was something really special about them, but we didn't know all whom people would see what we saw. In the first screenings happened, especially in Amsterdam when we presented the film, we did get blown away.

LW/Lies It must have been incredibly hard to film some of the scenes.

Taylor: Yeah it was, it was heartbreaking to see Shimbile and her family apart. And obviously you're very sensitive to intruding in those sorts of moments, so we were really conscious of making sure that the family were always comfortable with what we were doing. But they were very welcoming to us, they really understood that by telling this story we were going to help raise awareness of these problems. Some of the moments I wasn't sure how to navigate but when they asked us to carry on filming, that took away some of the responsibility from us.

LW/Lies Some say that you shouldn't become too emotionally involved with your subjects, would you say that's impossible?

Taylor: I don't know if it's ever that possible, but I think that we were able to get a much more authentic and compassionate portrait because we really cared about the kids a lot. I have been able to keep in touch with them. I speak to them about once a week, but I don't know if I could continue making films like this forever because I don't know if I would be able to make such close relationships to people and then move on. **John Holland**

**WE ARE  
TOGETHER**

RELEASED  
MARCH 7

In a theatrical landscape increasingly sympathetic to the documentary, *We Are Together* is still something truly special. A moving portrait of a group of South African AIDS orphans by first-time director Paul Taylor, the film has won an audience award in every country in which it has played, a critical premise it focuses on a ring-charismatic 12-year-old girl called Shimbile Moya, who lives in an orphanage. Singing, we learn, is a huge part of life there. When Shimbile's family comes together to remind themselves of their parents, even her 24-year-old brother Sifiso, who's dying of the same disease, manages to sing along with the words. 'We are together, yes we are family.' Shimbile is also the star soloist in the orphanage's talented choir, and there's a plan afoot to have them record a CD and go

on tour to raise funds.

Needless to say, there are moments of unbearable pregnancy and just as heart-breaking beauty as the horrors of the AIDS pandemic are juxtaposed with scenes of life at the orphanage laughing, mucking about and performing their songs. The music is central to both a source and expression of joy, and it would be a shabby-hearted viewer that wasn't blinking back tears at some point. **Jess Holland**

**Anticipation...** an AIDS documentary? It's thanks to one

**Hollywood...** skipping and deeply moving from the first shot. **Paul**

**In Retrospect...** eye-opening, inspiring and not easily forgotten. **Paul**

THE  
COTTAGE

卷之三

四一九

#### Bellyflopping back

Andrew Williams' latest is a curdled cocktail of chemic horror and the kind of limp, Look Who's Talking-style shtick his debut all but eradicated. It's a film of two halves — both of them dreadful.

An Andy Barkin, Plano

She-wraith and Steve O'Donnell break down his and her's of their hostage [Jennifer Ellison – a WAG on the warpath], we may as well be watching *Reaper: The Parts*. So it comes on series rated when a disfigured Turner [David Legeno] appears, heads start writing.

*FADE TO  
BLACK*

100

WCL CLASSIFIED  
March 7

On paper, Page 6

**Block buster** - pretty good bet  
In the wake of his break-up with Rita Hayworth, Orson Welles (Garry Marshall) attempts to kick-start his flagging career by filming a game movie in Italy.  
Intrigue ensues when a bit-part actor is kidnapped off and Welles finds himself in a noisily tangle of murder, intrigues and corruption.  
Unfortunately, Oliver Parker's half-baked pasted thriller suggests that some ideas look better on the pages of a notebook than the infinitely less forgiving medium of celluloid.

With a cast of self-centred characters and an impeccably



#### **and A Fish Called Blunder turns into A Fish Called Chubster**

Although an excellent  
comedian, Shaversmith is no  
Michael Palin, and when his  
prissy, prematurely aged Peter  
makes some impromptu foot  
surgery you might find yourself  
cheering on the borscht! Even  
Shaversmith had similar trouble  
with more dressy

An electric directional  
presence in his last venture,  
Wilkins doesn't seem to  
make that stitching together  
the still-twitching corpus of  
two geniuses does not make you  
daring, it makes you a little  
Baron Frankenstein unleashing  
forces — or, in this case, forces  
you cannot possibly control.  
If there's a more depressing

release this year than God  
help us all. **MRI** **Glenn**

Anticipation  
leads to brighter days  
  
Enjoyment  
leads to Standard One  
  
In Response  
leads to Standard One



lumpen plot, Parker's film needly numbs about as much tension as a 20-year-old rubber band. Diego Luna does his best as Wallace's long-suffering pianist Sonnenschein to repeat the role in character, coexisting entirely of transparently thin Italian stereotypes but, confusing his run of stocky appearances in substanceless films, confirms

only that his agent wouldn't be able to spot a turkey if it was served with cranberry sauce.

Since its completion in 2006, it looks like the film's UK distribution has been unimpressive and shifting as to the fate of *Aussie to Black*. On the evidence of this cut, it would be altogether kinder to release it into the wild rather than a packed one-man show.

**Anticipation.** A process with retaining a cinematic base while anticipating ideas. Thus

ANSWER: **WALLACE**

In Retrospect...  
We stand for your  
well-being. You

## SHOTGUN STORIES

RELEASED April 11

**When is it appropriate**  
to gatecrash a funeral, demand  
the afterhours of what an asshole  
the deceased was and then spit  
on the coffin? Perhaps when  
said asshole is an alcoholic and  
abusive father who abandoned  
family number one, then joined Jesus  
and created a clean-living,  
farming-oriented second family  
seven years later.

Three brothers—Son  
Hagen (Michael Shannen), Boy  
Hagen (Douglas Lopri) and Kid  
Hagen (Barlow Jacobs)—are  
mired in the bleak,小nesses  
of rural Arkansas life. When the  
opportunitiy arises to attend

everyone of the callousness their  
father was capable of, it's evident  
that for Son, Boy and Kid, it is  
neither forgotten nor forgiven. For  
these half-brothers, there is a  
need to preserve the competing  
memories of their father, which  
leads to a fatal escalation in which  
family dynamics, coercion and  
explosive expressions of trigger-happy  
masculinity combine.

First-time writer/director  
Jeff Nichols has a spare style  
that sometimes lingers on the  
vastness of cotton fields or desolate  
town centers a bit too long.  
The dialogue is lean but the  
performances of his actors,



particularly Shannon's Son  
Hagen, have plenty to say.  
Nichols' focus on eddies  
dealing with a lost home  
parent could be considered  
the southern-fried flipside  
to the urban-and-dissolute *The  
Savages*, Debra Granik's

piece on the festival  
circuit already there.

**Enjoyment:** You know it  
will end in tears, but  
it's worth it to see the  
tension unfold there.

**In Retrospect:** A subtle  
but wise movie there.

APPROXIMATELY \$100,000

## UNDER THE BOMBS

RELEASED March 27

**The special effects**  
in this film are something else.  
Destroyed roads, bombed-out  
bridges, smoldering remnants of  
houses and growing widow wreaths  
all captured with striking realism.  
Except there are no big-budget  
pyrotechnics here; it's real footage  
of Lebanon.

Director Philippe Aractingi  
decided to start filming a handful  
of days after the outbreak of the  
2006 Israel-Lebanon war. With  
only a couple of professional  
actors, he mustered the rest of his  
cast from soldiers, journalists and  
citizens all playing themselves.

The film centres on Zain  
(Wade Akram Farhat), a modern  
Arab woman living in Dubai. She  
returns to Beirut to track down her  
son who moved back to Lebanon  
to live with her sister in order to  
evade the fallout from a messy

divorce. Zain hasn't been able to  
get through to her family since the  
bombing started. Tony (Georges  
Khalil), a taxi driver, agrees to  
take her to the south for a large  
fee. So begins a wild, polar chase  
that oscillates between suspense  
and despair as the pair move from  
place to place on snapshots of  
information and a thread of hope.

Under the double-in-your-face look at the human cost  
behind the "collateral damage" of war,  
it broods with subtle  
statements, little comments from  
the characters—"I don't care  
about religion. My son is lost"—  
ache with a message that can be  
read on numerous levels. Zain is  
Muslim and Tony Christian,  
brought together by exceptional  
circumstances. A critique of  
Lebanon's divided communities or  
the ongoing religious intolerance



in the Middle East? It doesn't  
matter; both analogies are potent.

Held together by restored  
performances from Khalil and Farhat, the chopping and  
changing nature of their  
relationship makes for intriguing viewing. This is a film that doesn't  
set out to have a political agenda  
but can't escape it. As the screen  
scrolls past a Hezbollah sign ("You  
destroyed the bridges, we have  
mended their hearts!"), it's easy to  
see just how extremist one can  
be in the Middle East.

**populations. Under the bombs**  
may not blow you away but it  
certainly leaves a craterized  
dent in your conscience. Ed Blocker

**Anticipation:** *Beirut*.  
Arabia's subtleties don't  
leave enough of clues on  
the management there.

**Enjoyment:** Would be the  
wrong to say? There

**In Retrospect:** A big  
but mostly bleak year.



## GARAGE

PALM SPRINGS  
MARCH 7

REVIEWED BY  
JONATHAN LIEBMAN  
WITH A FILM BY  
MARK O'HELLAHAN

**Completed in the same spare style as Adam & Paul, the second collaboration between director Leney Abrahamson and writer Mark O'Halloran is a remarkably assured work that withstands comparison to the Coen brothers. At times unbearably poignant, Garage evocatively depicts with comedy to tell its beautifully drawn tale from the vantage of contemporary Irish life.**

Regarded by his neighbours as a harmless misfit, eliciting benign tolerance and occasional abuse, Jose (Peter Dinklage) has spent all his adult life as the caretaker of a crumbling pearl station on the outskirts of a small town. Chaste and lonely, Jose is also relentlessly optimistic and, in his own peculiar way, happy. But over the course of summer

the world suffers a shift when a sly teenager, David (Conor Ryan), comes to work with him. Initially performing their usual tasks in silence, they tentatively open up and soon Jose's drinking come down at the railway tracks with the local lads. This evanescent moment needs leading to an awkward tilt at intimacy with local shop girl Geraldine (Anne-Marie Duff). But following a single thoughtless moment, events begin to spiral from Jose's faltering grasp.

Tender though never sentimental, Garage is also soberingly realistic in its portrait of a dissolved community where drinking, breeding and fucking are the main entertainments. The town's inhabitants seldom leave, descending instead into a rare

of frustration and remorse. Anne-Marie Duff in particular brilliantly radiates a resigned forebight of her future. Incidents such as a local man drowning a newborn litter of pups are handled with perfect restraint, further contributing to the darkness that sits at the film's core and which assumes increasing poignancy as it progresses to a powerful conclusion.

Taut and economical in both script and style (an overriding minimalism extends to the use of a single static camera), Peter Robertson's thin-free photography and well-judged use of natural lighting nonetheless lend the film an opulent beauty, not least in its depiction of a landscape largely unscathed by the ravages of time. At the forefront of its numerous virtues

are a host of perfectly played performances. Irish comedian Pat Shortt excels, giving subtle glimpses of his life while imbuing his character with remarkable physical gestures. Guaranteed to enthrall if those that see it, Garage is a work of real distinction. *John West*

**Anticipation** Through well-rehearsed no-the-festive circuit. **Availability** remains an unknown quantity. **Film**

**Enjoyment:** A touch-of-the-miserable approachness of tragedy and humour. *Four*

**In Retrospect:** seek this out; you won't be disappointed. *Four*



## IN BRUGES

RELEASED  
12/11



**Christmas, and foggy**  
Bruges is fully booked, but Ray (Colin Farrell) and Ken (Brendan Gleeson) manage to snag a flight for two seats. They're literally on the run, and they don't know why. Only their boss Harry (Ralph Fiennes) knows, but for now they must sit it out in a smoggy dog-tale of boredom, reflection and retribution in the moon-will-preserved town in Belgium.

We knew this because Ken reads guidebooks and is generally enthusiastic about Bruges, while Ray hates it. "Bruges is a shit-hole," he says, on several occasions. And on they go, bantering back and forth, like Mutt and Jeff or Bill and Ted, but with brawlers and throbbed concussions. But then, just when you think *In Bruges* has nothing to say, just when you think that it's a game

mug and a lousy exercise in style by its playwright-turned-director Martin McDonagh, the movie suddenly hits you with a moment that won't you square doing just that.

Like Ray stumbling into the bedroom after midnight, turning on the lights, waking up and talking directly to the ensemble, increasingly perturbedly. Ken: "Turn off the fucking light," bounces Ken. His head half-hidden in the pillow. "I've had no pants and seven bottles, and I'm not even pissed," replies Ray. It's a slice of life so deliciously banal, and so acutely observed that it's almost poetry. But it gets better.

Ray, in touch with his inner drug, is caught in a vicious verbal exchange with a supercilious Canadian in a late-night restaurant. "He pauses," says

Ray, naming his own life out loud, announcing his own stage directions (this is the work of a playwright, after all), "even though he should just hit the cunt." And guess what? He does.

But it gets better still. Because Harry arrives, and he's got a plan. Ray must die for botching the last murder job. And Ken is the one who has to do it. But it's not fair, because Ray is young, witty, has a rapid turn of phrase ("Stop whinging like a big gay baby"), is played by Colin Farrell with an aberrant amount of charisma, and has already made firm friends in Bruges — including dwarf Jimmy (Jude Law) and would-be paramour Chloe (Glenne Headley). But then again this is darker than your average hitmen-in-peril comedy. As McDonagh knows and proves, happy

endings are off the menu. Instead, there's a tightly woven mishmash of sacrificial bloodletting, of gimping and of that, punishing redemption threads inborn, and in the hope that morality has been purged by Ken and Ray. It ends as it started: in Bruges, at Christmas, in fog. *Kevin Kline*

**Anticipation:**  
Bogie-kiss: *Real Genius*.  
**Fuckell:** No thanks. *One*

**Enjoyment:** *The* *Dark* *Knight*.  
Take prime era *Mad Men*,  
with valentines,  
unstoppable super  
profane dialogue. *Four*

**IN RETROSPECT:**  
The "message" is gone;  
almost constantly, but  
the infectious joy  
remains. *Five*

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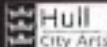
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# LONESOME JIM

RELEASED APRIL 15

MOVIE OF THE WEEK  
LONESOME JIM  
DIRECTED BY  
STEVEN BUSCEMI  
WRITTEN BY  
STEVEN BUSCEMI  
STARRING  
CASEY AFFLICK,  
JENNIFER LEE,  
ANDREW RAYEL,  
JESSA SPRINGER,  
AND OTHERS  
RATED R  
RUNNING TIME:  
100 MINUTES  
DISTRIBUTED BY  
COLUMBIA TRISTAR  
HOME ENTERTAINMENT

**It's something of a** tragedy that this heartily Buscemi-esque DV indie comedy from Steven Buscemi should be plucked from its shelf (again) which it has been gathering more dust for nigh on two years) for no cynical reason as its leading man, Casey Affleck, is currently basking in the awards season afterglow and thus may be in with a shot of having his rotus visage plastered all over the gleaming pages of *Next Magazine*. But boy, that's market capitalism for you, baby.

All that is made worse by

the fact that this is a movie that could easily have stood on its own legs given half a chance. By turns funny and melancholic, Buscemi's churning film others, a pathos on the worn but of small-town family life and details its emotionally shifting effects on burnt-out loner Jim (Affleck) who has been forced into returning to his Midwestern maternal hub when dreams of making it big in the city have skids. (Affleck eventually rears its loopy head in the form of sultry young nurse and widowed mother-of-one, Anna (Lee Tyler) who shows to

Jim's affected narcissism.

Structurally, it's not unlike Wes Anderson's *The Royal Tenenbaums*, with Jim and his similarly neopop dependent siblings trying to resurrect the eternally optimistic joys constantly being thrown by their boisterous, woolly-headed parents. Directed and performed with admirable robustness, you could hardly say it breathes new life into the tired tropes of the indie comedy. Still, this is a smart and assured work about the positive and negative sides of family nurturing and is sure to leave you with a big smile

on your chops. *Jessa Springer*

## Anticipation

*Family* deserves very decent film, but has trouble getting them released in the UK. *This*

## Enjoyment

Funny and contains a very decent lead performance from the immensely 'hot' Casey Affleck. *For*

*In Retrospect:* ready for the road. *Resounding* *do-not-miss*. *See*



## THE BOSS OF IT ALL

RELEASED February 20

**So, who is the boss of it all?** Lars von Trier's film has the brilliant, austere and shadowy, the great David has decided to produce a film comedy quixotic in the mould of *The Office*, which reveals an endearing, even playful side to the habitually subversive director.

The owner of a small IT firm, Rasmussen (Peter Gantzler) thinks it's high time to sell up and move on. The trouble is, when he started his company he invented a fictional pony he called "The Boss" of it all upon whom he could lay the blame for any unpopular decisions. When an iconoclastic firm decide to buy him out, she tries instead on negotiating with "the Boss" face-to-face. He then has to

employ a failed actor (the excellent Jørn Albrecht) to play the part.

The film sputters on a clutch of broad, impressionistic performances and an unashamedly surreal set-up, and we watch through metaphorically clenched fingers as the idiotic and pompous Albrecht creeps ever closer to that big final boardroom meeting.

It's filmed in what von Trier has deemed "Antoniuskino", which is, as he has described it, "a principle for shooting film developed with the intention of letting human influence by making chance in from the cold". It's basically a technique of scrapping. In which certain elements of the cameras are controlled by a computer, and although it adds nothing to the movie, it's symbolic of the director's cynical attitude



**Anticipation**  
The guy doesn't make movies; he makes statements. Four

**Enjoyment:** slight, funny and satisfyingly forew with a pleasantly dark undercurrent. Four

**In Retrospect:** a thoroughly erratic oddball with loads of depth. Four

## THE ESCAPIST

RELEASED April 11

**A cross between**  
*Gangs of New York* and *Madagascar*, *The Escapist* has to be one of the dullest prison capers to see in cinema history, and yet its dirty screeches through a tunnel of flashbacks and revelations turns out to be pretty good fun. Brian Cox as Frank Perry, a lifer who has accepted the punishment for his non-specific crime and is content to live out his days behind bars. That is until he receives a letter telling him that his drug-addict daughter is seriously ill, and his hangers assuaging a sense of rage, that will help her break out so he can find his little girl and have the fatherly chat that will set her on the straight and narrow.

Director Rupert Wyatt seems to have taken the approach that in prison anything goes as long as it provides some dramatic impact. So we get to see a bare-knuckle boxing match that is apparently sanctioned by the prison staff, and we watch a heavy old con-cut his own thumbs off with like more than a whimper, before getting up and walking away with only a handkerchief to stem the bleeding. More ridiculous still is the scene where Frank and his co-conspirators use a set of dominoes to plan their escape... mapping out ventilation shafts, underground reservoirs and train lines and nodding sagely as they overcome each of the obstacles. It means absolutely nothing, but



**Anticipation**  
Insane, though you'd expect a budget prison break. Two

**Enjoyment:** Worth a few laughs, though a budget prison break. Three

**In Retrospect:** a maddeningly argumentative, less cogent prison-break. Two

**CASHBACK**RELEASED  
February 20**U2 3D**RELEASED  
February 20

**What is love? That is Ben's** (Sean Biggerstaff) question after being cruelly dumped by his girlfriend. Unable to move on, he becomes an intern and takes a Berrysbury night shift to help. Happily, he realises he can stop time, and suddenly takes the opportunity strip the female customers and dress them. Director Shaun Ellis attempts to demonstrate how Ben is captured by beauty amidst the unattractiveness of his life, but never gets beyond gratuitous situation with the female form. What is love? Who knows? But it's definitely not with Lauren Bell.

**Not content with making poverty history,** Bono is now going after 3D cinema. The elements of old rock have shot a recent live show in Buenos Aires using the latest in 3D film technology. While some aspects such as the opening credits, the crowd and Larry Mullen's drum kit look fantastic, the 3D format seems to come unstuck with light flares, fading over shots and switching focus – often resulting in a hazy mess. Also, if you find the idea of watching a U2 concert as appealing as snarling through a sewage filter with Chris Farley, no amount of cameras probably can really make you enjoy it. **3D** **bio**

**FLASHBACKS  
OF A FOOL**RELEASED  
February 20**FOUR  
MINUTES**RELEASED  
March 7

**No one wants to see Hollywood stars feeling sorry** for themselves. Unfortunately *Flashbacks of a Fool* is a two-hour whining session in which Daniel Craig plays fading actor Joe Blcott Joe – poor thing – has wanted his makeup hot checks and along mountains of coke. And as a flashback to England shows us, it's all because he was raised by isolators and seduced by whores. As his bent bud has just croaked, Joe returns to buy redemption with a huge cheque for his mate's remains, thus proving what an awesome guy he is. Shallow? There are deeper puddles. **awful** **bio**

**Elderly Traude Krüger lives an isolated existence.** A piano teacher at a women's prison, when an unruly but audaciously talented prisoner enrolls for her classes, Krüger attempts to tame her sternity and alienates her towards compassion. In the process, her own difficult youth is revealed. *Four Minutes* is a gem of bittersweet dragging under the weight of a contrived narrative. The performances are impressive and the cinematography polished, but there are too many elements that seem clichéd, overriding the character depth the film pursues. **James Bourne**



## CALIFORNIA DREAMIN' (ENDLESS)

*Directed by Cristian Mungiu*

RELEASED April 19

**Director Cristian Mungiu was killed in a car**

crash on California Dreamin' (Endless) was undergoing post-production. The result, though 155 minutes and largely created, doesn't suffer in the slightest. A troupe of American soldiers passing through Romania is stopped at a train station. The corrupt station master sees to it that their stay is longer than necessary, while locals invite the Americans into their less-jaded beds with gusto. It's a light and charming film – and a tragedy that a talent as promising as Mungiu should be taken from us so early in his career. Danny Miller



## THE LAST MISTRESS

*Directed by Catherine Breillat*

RELEASED April 26

**Catherine Breillat's period piece sees lovelorn count**

Ryno de Margny (*The Red Part of Town*) grappling with passion for his hairy mistress, Valer (Isabelle Adjani), and love for his new wife, Hermengilde (Jacqueline Mercadier). There are extreme acts of generosity (Liberation) but where that film was rambunctious and cock-sure, *The Last Mistress* is an introspective journey, which only occasionally explodes into fireworks. It's not always edge-of-the-seat entertainment, but it's an interesting new direction from the provocateur that France loves to hate. Metc Barker

LFCers interview Catherine Breillat on page 26.



## 27 DRESSES

*Directed by Jason Reitman*

RELEASED March 14

**Katherine Heigl could have a huge career – sexy enough for the boys, but goofy enough for the girls. She's the best thing by miles in 27 Dresses as Jane, a naive underpaid trainee who watches the men of her dreams get flushed to her water. But once again a talented star is let down by a biffy game. The message of 27 Dresses is that independent women aren't happy unless they've got a man to make them feel good. It's exactly the sort of blundering hypocrisy that's destroying the rom-com, but until the core audience raise their standards, they'll continue to get the duds they deserve.** *Staff reviewed*



## BUNNY CHOW

*Directed by John Barker*

RELEASED March 25

**John Barker probably had visions of his no-fi feature debut turning out like an extended-warts version of *Easy Rider*. Much Griswold tip. Instead, it's a kind-of study of male infidelity, a kind-of snapshot of modern, multicultural South Africa, a kind-of road movie and a kind-of free-wheeling festival film. But it's none of these things convincingly. The main problem is that the two of male leads must rank among the most odious protagonists in modern movie history, and the film finds itself with almost nothing to say about them beyond tepid indulgence. *Staff reviewed***



## LAFFY-UP EAGER AND THE MONK OF METAL

**REVIEWED** BY JONATHAN LIEBMAN  
RELEASED MARCH 11



## VANTAGE POINT

**REVIEWED** BY CLAUDIO MASI  
RELEASED MARCH 7

**YouTube meets 'You What?!"** in a cosmic collision, and out of the wreckage sharebles Captain Eager and the Monk of Metal. Inspired by *Dice Disc* (Sly Cooper and Burton Moon), this zero-budget sci-fi flick in return to the rubber suits and cardboard sets of yore, as Captain Eager (James Vaughn) sets off on an intrepid mission to save the world. The cheerfully weird plot and hilariously bad acting are all part of the film's self-mockery, which betrays a lot of love for the genre's shiny knobs. Simon DeVos' lens at least proved that the spirit of old school cinema in the defaultly digital age. Denny Bang

**By replaying an assassination attempt on the US president from numerous perspectives, *Vantage Point* obviously has** endeavours to be a slick, point-MI1 political action thriller. But although it promises much, it fails to deliver. Hindered by a hugely implausible atmosphere of a plot, which becomes aimless beyond at times, the film ultimately squanders some astute suspense and intrigue in favour of brain-cell chasers and bags of dead bodies. America continues to reduce the defining event of the twenty-first century to comic genre. Edie Baskin (aka Ed Anderson)



## ASSEMBLY

**REVIEWED** BY JONATHAN LIEBMAN  
RELEASED MARCH 7



## MY BROTHER IS AN ONLY CHILD

**REVIEWED** BY CLAUDIO MASI  
RELEASED APRIL 4

**War feeds on death, but war cinema is a blood-pumping adrenaline rush.** Even when the aesthetic is as familiar as Feng Xiaogang's *Assembly*, there's something striking about seeing the full array of filmmaking in action: the doses, the doses, the special effects, the flat theatrics of combat photography. So even though the shadow of *Kong: Laufen's* *Requiem* and *Surveillance*'s *Private Ryan* hangs heavily over almost every frame, it's hard to resent *Assembly*. Set in the Chinese Civil War, it follows the healing tale of a communist officer; and though not explosively original, it is a treat. Matt Resnick

***My Brother Is An Only Child* tells the story of two working class siblings in the radical Italy of the '60s and '70s.** *Azio* (Elio Germano) inhabits his communized brother *Mario* (Riccardo Scamarcio) by falling under the spell of Mario Nastri's fascist party. Though it's more a reflection against his family's socialism than a genuine reflection of his beliefs, *Azio's* journey yearns to reflect the country's civil and social changes, as Domenico Luchetti uses his characters to show how differences and similarities can help us find stability in a rootless world. Liwei Sun



## THE BANK JOB

**REVIEWED** February 10

American satirist Stephen Colbert famously said of Chevy Chase that he respected him above all other comedians because Chase "never forgot what got him whenever it is he thinks he is [and] never ever attempted to do anything in any way different from the last thing he did." That sort of consistency is also demonstrated by Jason Statham, whose niche career (or misuse) continues in *The Bank Job*. Though based on the "true story" of a gang who accidentally got caught up in a royal blackmail, it plays out like a drunken pub anecdote. The bank job is cinema by numbers. —Jonathan Goldsmith



## THE CONFORMIST

**REVIEWED** February 10

Released two years after the upheavals of May '68, Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Conformist* is finally getting a much-deserved re-release in a pristine new print. The film stars Jean-Louis Trintignant as Mussolini, a young Hitler who, on joining the fascist cause in the 1930s, is assigned to assassinate his former philosophy professor. Bertolucci's film adopts the characteristics of totalitarian filmmaking to expose the moral bankruptcy behind the facist spectacles that flooded Italian cinema of the era. In so doing, he fashion's one of the most influential and controversial films in cinema history. —Mike Dwyer



## THE EYE

**REVIEWED** April 10

More desperate grasping at career ballast from Jessica Alba. She plays Sydney Wicks, a blind violinist whose sight is restored by a new pair of eyes which—shock horror!—used to belong to some dead Mexican. Now our foxy heroine is saving dead people. Alba really needs to avoid this kind of doo-doo-cutter genre trash. *The Eye* is a despicably unengaging Ruthless meets *The Ghost Whisperer* knock-off that also manages to mine the tired cliché that blindness instills some sort of Dareddevil-esque super sensory power. It's feeble and bland. Who does that remind you of? *Star Wars*.



## THE WORKSHOP

**REVIEWED** April 10

Obsessed with what he modestly terms 'the human condition,' filmmaker James Mangan tries to a California retreat run by a crusty British hippie who encourages self-absorbed boozes to retreat from their infelicitous, merely by having sex with one another. The deeply self-indulgent Mangan loses all this at face value, and we are left with a pseudo-philosophical exercise in narcissism that utterly fails to question the motives of *The Workshop's* self-styled 'guru,' or the vain and gullible 'students' who are拜倒在 his person. (It's like sitting through someone else's therapy session.) —Benjamin

chapter five.  
The back section  
in which we  
discuss the  
medium of film  
in its many  
mesmerising forms



CATHERINE  
BREILLAT

WE'VE GOT YOU THIS... IT'S NOT SECURITY FRIENDLY CHOCO



whole lotta love

Few filmmakers have been marked by controversy quite like Catherine Breillat. She is the 'porno auteur' whose exploration of female sexuality has shocked censors and the establishment (her last film, *Swimming Pool*, featured a woman being screwed by a male). To the industry, Breillat is a misogynist whose graphic preoccupation with rape and virginity is a national embarrassment. She claims that when the New York Film Festival was considering screening her work, an ambassador from Film France pried off to the Big Apple to tell them they were making a mistake. Is it any wonder that the auteur wrote an essay for *Tele* called 'On the Importance of Being Naked'?

And yet Breillat is far from a British provocateur: she's one of French cinema's great intellectuals — a professor at La Fémis, the Parisian film school, a master teacher of film at Columbia University, and a professor for senior citizens at the European Graduate School in Switzerland. She wrote her first novel at the age of 17. It was banned, of course.

Moreover, Breillat would have us believe that she doesn't have a romance. "My work is a very pure line in the quest for sexual identity," she says. "It's like the quest for the Holy Grail, a heroic quest to find the purity in the sexual relationship between two people. I've always said I was pansensual and sensuous," she adds. "I never had any aversion of making a scandal."

Sensual pansexualism and an denial of sensuality is the bedrock of Breillat's art, but what enrages her is that cinema is judged by skewed standards, especially when it comes from the perspective of a woman. "Men who have done things easier in cinema or literature don't see

sexual or provocative, like Jules et Jim or Henry Miller, have always been highly regarded," she says. "Everybody thinks I'm perverse and scandalous."

Why is cinema judged in a different aesthetic category to painting or literature? Nobody questioned the Decade of Alba when the paved route for Goya, but the morality of actors is constantly under scrutiny. Perhaps it's because cinema is the great democratic art form, and so the cultural elite don't have a code for the unruly, the free love, the ignorant masses who used to be protected from the likes of Bataille for their own good. "We shouldn't judge morally, we should judge aesthetically," Breillat persists. "I believe that cinema is a moral art, but what is moral is to be non-conformist because there is no need to conform. Art should not conform to what people want." But artistic freedom comes with a price: "When you're an artist you damage the preconceived ideas people have, and you take the risk of being hated. It is very difficult to bear but it's less hard to bear than to despise yourself."

If that's the case, it's slightly disconcerting to find that Breillat's latest film, *The Last Afternoon*, is a bit, well, close compared to previous outrages: it does comfortably mix a tradition of French costume drama, with a bunch of tiffs galloping around, fighting duels and having affairs. There's the odd dash of nudity and the total performance from Rossana Rocchi, but not even scandal magnet Susanna Mesquida can really get the pulse pumping. It's not a bad film, it just doesn't have the stamp of mischief that made *Roussane* and *Au Revoir les Enfants* so genuinely dangerous.

Her own explanation for the film's lack of buzz is that budget considerations

faced her to make a sacrosanct 35mm evening drama that French audiences could watch without fear. "But I am never in expansion," she adds defiantly. There is another reason why she might be tiring of her constant battles with the French establishment, however: in October 2004, Breillat suffered a stroke which left one side of her body paralysed, and her career in jeopardy. "I do a lot of films with my own body and I thought that I would no longer be able to do that," she says. Production of *The Last Afternoon* was delayed, and it was only by being circumlocution with her insurers that Breillat got the buckling to continue. Quite simply, however, "There was a sort of attitude that actually allowed me to do things. At one point, without knowing, I jumped out of my chair, up and down like a spring. I would never try to do it if I wasn't on set because then I would fall and hurt myself." Indeed, it wasn't all plain sailing: "I did once make my hand explode because I cut myself and I was pressing so hard on it that the bone came out."

At 66, the harsh truth is that Breillat isn't the young iconoclast mapping the beds of the industry anymore. The kind of shock she suffered would have more directors pondering their future, and perhaps their past. After a career defined by struggle, does she find herself looking back and wondering of the made moment? "No. I may have done more films but I been more loved, but from a young age I've built myself on contradictions, and I made films that were absolutely necessary to me." And regardless she has a fire, but one for herself: "I have respect for the people who think that my films are provocations. I think they live a very poor life," *au revoir*.



MICHAEL  
PITT

the JUJY FACES ASSASSIN

# bad boy ...

If you want the truth about the enigmatic Michael Pitt, here it is: he's introspective and androgynous and has a fine-tuned sense of his own beauty. He meanders and passes and strolls at the loose. He's got a beaten-up canvas bag full of books and CDs. He looks like he needs a smoke. He's normal. It's just that, in a world of hyper real movie stars, the normal people look like freaks.

"In my teenage years I was on my own, so I was, sort of, left to look after myself. I was a little strange. And then you end up working and people scratch the persona, which is, at the end of the day, just bubblegum. That's all other people's perception and that's mine, yeah, you're making movies and all of a sudden you're the figure, but when you're not making movies you're just, like, a broke dude."

"It's his androgynousness that makes Pitt so devastating in Michael Mann's extraordinary *Rainbow Connection*. He plays

Paul, the "whiner d\*ck," who, with his buddy Peter, makes an average middle-class family bourgeoisie and fucks with them, big time. With them and us. *Rainbow Connection* is one of the most provocative films you'll ever see: a big, fucking middle finger to cinema-goers everywhere.

Pitt was so fleshy-cut in anybody it's a fucked up movie, I know," he says. "When I watched it I was, like, 'Oh God that's a fucking horrible film.' It's really good but it's fucking horrible. To tell you the truth, I'm not sure I really understood what Michael was trying to say with it." A short-for-short remake of Ilmanki's German-language original, neither the script nor the director gave Pitt much room for maneuver. "I could tell from the rushes that Michael was a very demanding director who wanted things done his way," says Pitt. "It's a hard job, you know? I would try for the first half of the filming we

were just fighting and fighting, then I ended up loving him — now I think he's amazing."

Some of the other relationships on set were also strong. Tom Roth, who co-stars as the father of the terrorized family, was described as "pro" who was the alpha male. "In one of our first scenes where he actually slaps my character, the first time he did it he fucking nailed me," explains Pitt, grinning at the memory. "I kind of took a like he was saying, 'Don't fuck with me, lad!'"

Looking ahead, Pitt's focus is on his band, Pagoda, and their deal with hip New York record label Rocawear/Promo. Emerging from the song-cutter fund she group, but he's not quite ready to make a papery pact to get signed, so don't expect to see him in spandex anytime soon. "It's just an rap-style man," he says. "To tell you the truth, it's all just a journey for me. I'm just trying to take it as it comes." After all,



HARMONY  
KORINE

HILL THE SEAL IN SIGHT NO ONE PLEASE GIVE UP ON U?

for  
life?

*Adrien Brody*, Harmony Korine's first feature for eight years, is an unusual film. Never mind the Mexican Michael Jackson impersonator, the sky diving man, or even the talking boiled egg, this is the first Korine film which hasn't user with major upshots from the censor. Yet, that's right it features no teenage promiscuity; no procreation with Down's syndrome; and no car killing. What gives?

"I feel different now than I did when I was 18," says Korine, looking almost sheepish. "With *Adrien Brody*, I wanted to try to go with the simplicity of the images, to build it up rather than break it down." Clearly the 38 year old is crumpled, unshaven, crusty and a wedding ring isn't the same as the terrible who wrote *Kids* in 1995 – the man who once told an interviewee she "plus d'argent me". Put a baseball cap on him and he could be Steven Spielberg. Well, almost.

In the past, "The Harmony Korine Show" seemed integral to the films he was making. He could always be relied upon for an offbeat quote or bizarre film pitch (like an adaptation of *Elmer Gantry* starring *Snoop Dogg*). Does he still see himself as a part of the act? "It's like vaudeville," he says with a weary shrug. "You get

yourself up there, do a little dance, do a little song and hopefully you catch some people's attention."

That personal involvement with the art took its toll. In 1998, his *Fight Club* project, on which Korine provoked fights with strangers and blazed the rounds, eventually got him hospitalized. He swapped the movie business for drugs, and, with the kind of Hollywood plus cerveza that would once have repelled him, love of filmmaking set him back on the straight and narrow. "On set is the only time I really feel like I'm in the right place," he says. "When we wrapped *Adrien Brody* I got down on my knees and kissed the dirt because I'd made another movie."

With Korine's youthful excesses behind him and his most commercial film yet on general release, a sense the journey since the mainstream is all but complete. "It's been a dream of mine to work with Harmonon Ford," he announces towards the end of the interview. "Yeah. I've always thought he's like what a star should be, an American star." And how exactly would he cast Hollywood's ultimate embarrassment, dad? "At a tranny. I think he'd be a good tranny." It's good to see that some things haven't changed. *Elvis & Nixon*

# fuck mtv!

Music videos are the place where tomorrow's feature film flyboys cut their teeth and bust some sick: Michel Gondry, Spike Jonze, David Fincher, Jonathan Glazer, Edgar Wright and Garth Jennings all popped their cherry with the music promo, but what about the other 99 per cent of pro directors? For anyone lower down the food chain who hasn't quite managed to scrape together an international repatiation, a selection of well-connected mates and enough money to keep you in those next foldaway chairs, the prospect of making a living as a full-time music video maker might seem a bit unlikely.

However, lurking beneath the radar is a surprising community who don't give a shit if video killed the radio star – these are the guys who'll take Kim Basinger over Chita Rivera any day. From cult music masters making no-budget videos on the sly, to down gods like Douglas Wilson (the man behind Jarvis Cocker's 'Don't Let Him Waste Your Time') and experimental poster boys Encyclopedia Pictures (the bunnies behind the next Björk video, 'Wanderlust'), directors are pushing boundaries with their innovative spex, and ushering in the future of film.

Take Kanga Barza. The name might not be familiar, but chances are you've already seen her work. Barza has shot promos for Kate Nash, Calvin Harris and

The Temper Trap. Based in New Zealand, she's signed to Partisan, Michel Gondry's production company. She may be making a splash with promos for the MySpace generation now, but that wasn't always the case – Kanga started out making videos for friends' bands while studying in Sydney. "Back then, there was never a moment that I believed I would ever be doing it solely as a profession, but just like a musician will always play his instrument for work or for pleasure, I was creating videos because I wasn't happy unless I was making them."

Now she's been at Partisan in London for a year, which has enabled her to quit her day job and part-time video work work. As a profession it may be unpredictable and poorly paid (many gross directors pay the bills by shooting commercials), but Kanga couldn't be happier – or busier. When she's not shooting, she's researching, writing treatments, or bouncing ideas around with other directors at the company.

Also making an impact on the promo scene are French duo Jean & Françoise. The 25-year-old girl group scooped Best Video at the MTV Europe Music Awards in 2007 for their work on Justice's 'DJ, N' U B.'

Thanks to the internet and the accessibility of digital filmmaking, young directors now have more platforms to show their work. With its resource

roster and schedules clogged up with costly battles, MTV is losing its grip to the high priests of promos. Technology has changed, the doors open for uprising directors, but recent downsizings in the music industry mean that budgets are being squeezed.

Helping young directors make the most of these changes is RadarBarbieVideo. It's a social network and festival established by Caroline Borromeo as a place for talent to share in an overcrowded arena. Radar has only been up and running for two years, but already Caroline has secured the support of record labels and helped launch careers. "It used to be that you could get a job in a production company and work your way up, but that's no longer a guarantee for success," she explains.

The proliferation of salaried makes life difficult for young directors, and also makes it tricky to keep up with new work. Fortunately there are people like David Knight, who runs the website promonewswr.com and produces the bi-monthly 'VID' showcase at the National Film Theatre. And anyway, who are we to complain that there isn't too much competition! All these directors getting out there and making their own stuff – it's all very *Be Kind Rewind*. You know, the film by that old guy, *Lasse Hallström*.

[www.radarbarbievideo.com](http://www.radarbarbievideo.com)

DA  
HIGH

\* -

*The Player* (1992) and *Living in Oblivion* (1995) are two darkly pessimistic movies about moviemaking available now on DVD. But what messages do these '90s classics give to today's classics? Specializing filmmakers Barry Stief and Hugo James evaluate



Between the artist and the public is a greedy cabal of weaklings, chancers and pretenders. It is not enough that a script is brilliant. It has to be marketable, cost-effective and original, and it's got to capture 'the zeitgeist'.

Many writers naturally become defensive and embittered about this, and nowhere is this better illustrated than in Robert Altman's *The Player*. That's why actress Jane Fonda (as Olympia Dukakis) knows that she slick studio Mill (Tim Robbins) can't be a writer: Mill is handsome, well-heeled and, though unskilled, unashamedly remorseless.

More writers are the opposite. Confusing commerce with craft and effect, they have a idea that the more marginalized and bitter, the more profound their work surely is: success

is only possible through selling out. Self-delusion is crucial survival mechanism, but with self-delusion comes false self-awareness – awareness that work must be intelligible to others, that no work is ever beyond criticism, and that art, and especially film, is business.

As such, *The Player* can almost be regarded as a manifesto for every writer. On the surface it's a poor modern masterful role where Goliath triumphs David. But ultimately, you can see it as a triumph of the writer. He becomes crowning popper master, *The Player* not the played. After all, anything goes: box office smash like a happy ending.

*Movie眉批* review copyplay and magazine articles, and *Movies* studio executives will be your best



Growing up I was a stubborn opposer of art-house cinema, but now I've done my time on set I'm slowly being drawn into the 'dark side' of prestige.

The change of heart came from realising that making a bog standard film is rough enough. Trying to make one thrilling enough to justify two or even three hours of the audience's life can seem nigh impossible. This kind of wake-up call can lead people to either give up, turn to *Day by Day* by Robert McKee, or switch to *Oblivion*.

The film was like an epiphany: It's a reminder that it's time we stop throwing crucial risks and money at commercial films – any films for that matter – and

try to go for an bold commitment and the sheer ability to have made it in relative peace, it's always easy to say 'I could have done better', but did you?

*Living in Oblivion* is an unforgivable indie flick about an indie flick. It's dedicated to the pretty problems that wrack heroic yet well-intentioned but budgetless films. Director Tom DiCillo's true message is that it isn't easy, folks. How about you cut us – all of us – some slack next time you press play on the DVD?

*Zapier* *Overlook* (1995) currently directs music videos, viral commercials and short films. She's also contributing to page 28 of *Robert McKee's Story*.



### KW 31 (2006)

**DIR:** RICARDO CASTAÑEDA

**AVAILABLE:** NOW

The influence of J. Lovecraft on recent prints on other films in the genre is undeniable, and in many ways as lucidly, systematically and cynically rippling off Hideo Nakata's *Ringu* or Takashi Shimizu's *Final Destination*, however, it is cool and curiously haunting many modern filmmakers. Thankfully, *KW 31* takes the best elements of the Asian horror boom but uses them in an original, sophisticated concept that forgoes characterization and allegory over flesh tones and perfidious plot twists in a story about a haunted stretch of road. *Another #White*

### SHORT CUTS (1993)

**DIR:** ROBERT ALTMAN

**AVAILABLE:** NOW

Based on the short stories of Raymond Carver, *Short Cuts* is a pessimistic study of life in 1990s Los Angeles, told through 12 distinct yet oddly interconnected narratives of dysfunctional relationships, death and infidelity. The cinematography – although occasionally slow moving – is superbly balanced with a laconic but keeps perfectly muted emotional resonance throughout. Performances from the stellar cast vary, with Tim Robbins commanding as a lonely, indecisive cop; demands compelling as Cheri Pann's sympathetic journalist of a troubled, sexually impulsive pool cleaner whose unmeting fluctuation results in a classic break. *Nicholas Gage*

### DON GIOVANNI (1979)

**DIR:** JOSEPH LITER

**AVAILABLE:** NOW

Based on the legend of Don Juan, *Don Giovanni* is the story of the ultimate anti-hero – a callous narcissist dragged by relentless lust through a trail of sexual encounters that lead him, ultimately, to Hell. There's a clear replicative, almost incestuous, connection here to this film version of Mozart's opera, as the Don (Ruggiero Ricci) overplays the lascivious pride of the role perfectly, doggedly and gleefully unwilling to reduce the frantic sex in its entirety. The movie costumes and stock locations (the darkest corners of Venice) capture the essence of Mozart's vision as all its camp and sumptuous glory. Liter's adaptation is a perfect start for anyone new to opera, and this is a beautifully restored reissue. *Wally Barnes*

### A MIGHTY HEART (2007)

**DIR:** MICHAEL WINTERBOTTOM

**AVAILABLE:** NOW

Fresh “Years seem never when half a dozen journalists leave their life to suddenly disappear in Karachi.” Winterbottom co-directs, joins in hair, adds “it’s a true story” Studio Execs “I’m gonna look at the Middle East, I’m fed up of it by a lot! Bah! You’re onto something here!” And they were. Briefer, cynical aside, John’s not bad. With hand held high, the consummate international figure as Mariane Pearl – a pro-guitar Christian rock journalist heading to find her husband, Daniel. Thoroughly engagé, it casts the Karachi poker powerfully but raises questions regarding the Pearl’s remissness of fellow journalists, the Indian American Isha Noman (played by Aishwarya Rai), who scores more screen time equal. *George Holt*





**BUG (2006)**  
**DIR: WILLIAM FRIEDKIN**  
**AVAILABLE: NOW**

Narrative about the return of her violent husband (Harry Connick Jr.) from prison, damaged, lonely Agnes (Ashley Judd) turns sky-high—obsessed Peter (Michael Shannon) since her arrest 2006, and a willfully drawn into her world of madness. Agnes expecting bizarre style horror from William Friedkin's bug will be disappointed—inher this is an intense, claustrophobic drama (adapted from Tracy Letts' stageplay) about collective psychosis, never more relevant than in this post-9/11 era of global paranoia. The direction is raw, and the cast exceptional (in neither wallflower roles), with Judd giving her career-best performance. A making-of documentary and Friedkin interview complete for the over-shown director's craftistry. *John Solt*

**BRICK LANE (2007)**  
**DIR: SARAH GAYRDN**  
**AVAILABLE: MARCH 10**

Based on Monica Ali's novel, Brick Lane is set mostly in London where a widow's outside projects her from her Bengali-fied home to an arranged marriage in London's East End. She's been married 14 years and Nazneen is coping well, at her husband's (Shoaib Ibrahim) orders and pleasing her frumpy daughter-in-law (Reema Patel). Her catastrophically domineering in-laws are perturbed by half-witting Nazneen and once too many fistfights in the rear windows of home. Enter the unyieldingly passionate London-born novelist Martin Edwards, and her blind days are shaken up by the availability of their affair. Brick Lane is a touching story of acceptance, and shows a vast array of different kinds of human love. *Stacy Reit*

**GHOSTS OF CITE SOLEIL (2006)**  
**DIR: ABGER LETH**  
**AVAILABLE: NOW**

Ghosts of Cite Soleil is three brothers' life and death, obsession of the Observatory (Leth's film), the government-sponsored gang that police the slums of Paris-as-Prague. Black March has been made of the unprecedent of excess both gained in his subjects. He's there watching as he breaks play gangster—controlling their neighborhood while simultaneously spouting rhetoric about "looking out for their people." His concern largely lingers over them to have clean and green glasses, blinding both Letts and the viewer to the depth of urbanity. However, these down-to-the-bone for decades by the endless conflict between men exactly like them and like them (humanism isn't the word). This is inherent in the existence. *Wesley Rector*

**THE COUNTERFEITER (2007)**  
**DIR: STEFAN RUDDWITZKY**  
**AVAILABLE: MARCH 17**

The Counterfeiter is a truly superb World War II drama based on the life of conman Jew (Oscar-nominee) Adolf Burger and master counterfeiter Faustino Baumritter, who were detained in Auschwitz's top-secret currency counterfeiting unit. Though willfully gambling with his fellow inmates' lives, Burger subsumes all their strengths to produce the dollar. As each day passes without success, the Nazis up the death threats. Caught in a moral impasse, his cohorts find it increasingly difficult to ride with the robber. Like the similarly modest Hungarian Holocaust film, *Farewell (2002)*, this is never sentimental, but unforgivable. *George Miller*





### THE SINGER (2006)

**DIR:** XAVIER GIANNOLI

**AVAILABLE:** NOW

Alessandro Marconi (Giovanni Depardieu) is an ageing dancer (in costume) in provincial Clermont-Ferrand. When he meets the younger Alessandro Marconi (Cédric de France) he finds new motifs in his repertoire of songs about love, longing, and loss. Well written and exquisitely performed, *The Singer* goes through the apparent exhaustion of its subject in a deeper sense of melancholy. The film is understated and measured, much like its worn (and thus?) aged mainstay. In an interview in the extras, Giannoli credits the original *Rushmore* as one of his less obvious influences — certainly Depardieu himself, however, adds to it his excellent singing voice that proves to be real surprise, often and



### TOUGH ENOUGH (2006)

**DIR:** DETLEV BUCK

**AVAILABLE:** NOW

Set in Berlin and filmed in the noted zones of the city's long-blackened past, *Tough Enough* tracks Michael, a 16-year-old with an honest face. When his mom's boyfriend robs them one, they have to move from the posh suburbs to a run-down neighborhood. Michael is crushed since the hands of the happy-slipping leaves he has now released by the local drug dealer but, of course, there's a price to pay. As the pace quickens, he goes from covering schoolboy in long-gone drug manner and is forced to face the consequences. Both of them and a few loose ends let you draw your own conclusions. —Audrey Reed

### ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND (1971)

**DIR:** WILLIAM STERLING

**AVAILABLE:** NOW

This 1971 ensemble piece takes Lewis Carroll's frankly dodgy tale of Alice and her fantastical adventures down a "rabbithole" — more like a Freudian/Lacanian analysis here — and poetry work done as beyond belief. Starring 11-year-old Fionnula Flanagan as Alice alongside a host of upper crust costars such as Peter Sellers (the March Hare), Dudley Moore (the Dormouse), and Spike Milligan (Grey hare), this is a fantastical musical gone deeply crazy. Faithful to the original, for sure, but then so was *Rent*. Wait for Fred A. and his bad-assed friends if you would a Freddie Krueger Doing Doctor.

### ONE TO ANOTHER (2006)

**DIRS:** JEAN-MARC BARR, PASCAL ARNOLD

**AVAILABLE:** MARCH 10

It could have come straight from a short story by French philosopher George Bataille. After all, his notorious '60s tale, *Me Mur*, was successfully adapted and directed for film by Christophe Honoré in 1998. Yet this particular investigation around a mystery is actually based on an actual event. One hot summer in the South of France, a group of friends who enjoy sexual partners more often than their underwear suddenly kill the most attractive of the group. Writer Pascal Arnold said what drove him to the story one reading that the killer never revealed their motivations and indeed we remain in the dark today. —George Miller



# super 'grass'



A little over five years since it first graced TV screens, Paul Greengrass' breakthrough drama *Bloody Sunday* has lost none of its power. With its run-and-gun combat aesthetic and full-blooded performances, it remains one of the best British TV productions of all time. We got in director on the phone from Spain, where he's shooting long drama *Imperial Life in the Emerald City*, to ask him what he remembers.

LWLM: Looking back on *Bloody Sunday* now, what does the film mean to you?

Greengrass: Well, it was a very important film for me, obviously. The more you make films, the more you realize how lucky you are when one works. People talk about films like as if it's something that can be controlled, but no matter what any one person does on a film, it needs everybody to come together for a film to work.

LWLM: Do you find that you have one memory that really defines the experience?

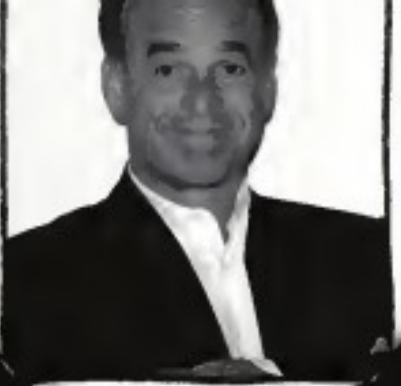
Greengrass: Once you get into a conflict, you lose your sense of shared history, you know? So the idea was, can a group of British soldiers who'd served in Northern Ireland, and people from Derry who'd either been on that march or whose family members had been on the march, make this incredibly contentious event and somehow fashion a film that we can all stand behind as telling something of what

it must have been like? Well, the few days that we shot the inevitable happened: all the people from Derry stood in one end of the street, and all the soldiers in their uniforms stood 200 yards away. And you feel this enormous tension because, you know, you're talking about a lot of pain and anger on either side. Then a guy called Don Muller, who had been a schoolboy on the barricades that day and had got shot at, walked across the divide and up to the soldiers and shook their hands. And the experience of making the film became very precious because it was like a messy-sided conversation as we all, from our different experiences, discussed the Troubles, Bloody Sunday and what a message for us to feel like it was all coming to an end and there was going to be a brighter future.

LWLM: How brokered were you at the time by some of the hostile reactions – the 'anti-British' allegations?

Greengrass: Not really because we had powerful stakeholders in the drama and a hundred odd former soldiers who'd served in Northern Ireland, and they thought it was real and credible. It would have been very easy to make a film about Bloody Sunday that was polemical and inflammatory, but the whole point of making it is that collective falshon was that a became compassionate and understanding – it didn't seek to condemn. After Bloody Sunday

*Bloody Sunday* is out now on DVD.



# hearts and minds

Nick Broomfield's *Hearts for Haditha* is a powerful rendering of one of the Iraq war's most controversial incidents. On November 15, 2005, US Marines allegedly massacred 24 Iraqi civilians. Through the facts of the case remain in dispute, Broomfield has produced a powerful piece of neo-realist agitprop that makes a compelling companion piece to *Bloody Sunday*. Though perhaps not as searing as Greenaway's masterpiece (*where Bloody Sunday stands at the zenith of civilization, this is *Bloody*'s natural home*) it is nevertheless a searching examination of the horrors of war and, perhaps more importantly, an appreciation of the lives of everyday Iraqis. Director Nick Broomfield explains...

LWLM Is *Watching this alongside Bloody Sunday*, it seems that the military is unable or unwilling to learn from its mistakes.

Broomfield I think both films are about the language of war and what happens when you stop talking and start firing.

battle. Fear and paranoia and the need to survive kick in, and tragedies like Haditha or Bloody happen. But it's very hard to blame the individual soldier for what they do. It's the politicians who have engineered the situation and brought it to the point where there's no longer any communication.

LWLM Is the soldier pull the trigger

Broomfield Because from a very young age they are taught to kill, kill, kill. I think they see victims. When they come back to America a lot of them are completely unfit for human life. We haven't really changed very much from the days when the poor were press-ganged into the army and no one really gave a fuck who happened to them. Occasionally some poor bastard is singled out for having committed a war crime, which is a way in which we pretend that there is some justice and humanity, and we are vaguely disengaged. But any politician knows when war is declared that this country is going to happen, and it always will happen.

LWLM Why was it important for you to show the perspective of the insurgents?

Broomfield More than anything else in this war, very little information has come through to people about what the insurgency really is, what Iraqis are like, or what their life is like, so I felt part of the reason for making the film was to bring back some humanity to all of the sides.

LWLM In *Bloody Sunday*, Greenaway uses James Nesher to anchor the drama, how you went with Elliot Bain, a non-professional ex-Marine. Why was that?

Broomfield Interestingly enough, I chose a star equivalent to James Nesher to play the main role but he just couldn't hack it. I like *Bloody Sunday* a great deal but I think that it's a much more traditional drama, whereas this is going back to my roots as a free-sensory - talking real people and their real voices and making the narrative from that. It's a new way of trying to make a film. *After Suicide*.

*Hearts for Haditha* is out now on DVD.





**GANG OF FOUR,  
LOVE ON THE GROUND,  
WUTHERING HEIGHTS  
(1984-1988)**  
**DIR: JACQUES RIVETTE**  
**AVAILABLE: NOW**

As Ben's *Distelli* the *Azur* borders far away from the sun-kissed curves, the powers that be have seen fit to release three of Jacques Rivette's previous films on DVD. While JR's good name may be less familiar to the masses than his New Wave chums Truffaut and Godard, Principlakids will know him as one of the key players in one of European cinema's most fruitful periods.

Of the three films on offer, *Gang of Four* (1982) offers the most sensible biopicial for future arthouse. This seedy, paranoid drama focuses on four young women working at the casting of Romeo regular Brigitte Bardot. The girls' camouflaged existence is soon disrupted with the arrival of a shifty-looking writer (Omar Metwally) who claims to have news of a former companion. Sex and suspense follow, and though the watery ending is somewhat bizarre, the film succeeds in tapping a rich vein of pre-color Gothic cool.

Next up is *Love on the Ground* (1984), which sets out to explore a similar theme – namely, the conflict between reality and fiction. This date around proceedings are horribly drenched with experimental oddness, the kind that tends to split audiences like Cannes film's pickled animals. Two things move us with a cash-happy play right, agreeing so set out his new pair, which it is in the process of being finished. The moving drama within a drama is superficially engaging, but the snuff's pace makes for a lethargic experience. All the same, there's food for thought for patient viewers.

Finally comes *Wuthering Heights* (1981) – sadly the case of the finer *Brûlé*, Rivette shifts Ruth Ida's Yorkshire tragedy to 1950s France, while forgetting to pack compassion in for average bug. The result is a drab tragedy, with Lucie Betti and Fabrice Lavié mapping around a selection of scrubby-blown country landscapes. It won't pack at your heartstrings, but a might aggravate your haemorrhoids. Only *Laurel* *Nasturtium* *Vaginum* and apply. That scarcely detracts from what is a must-have series of films for any movie lover. *Steve Kelly*

# EX-RENT HELL

BY ADAM LEED-WEIS

# like father like son (1987)



DIRECTOR  
ROD DANIEL

STARRING  
DUDLEY MOORE  
SEAN ASTIN  
KIRK CAMERON

BOX NOTABLES  
PROPERTY OF GRAND RAPIDS  
PUBLIC LIBRARY STAMP

#### TAGLINE

'CHRIS AND HIS DAD HAVE  
ACCIDENTALLY CHANGED BODIES  
—BUT NO BIG DEAL. CHRIS GETS THE  
JAG AND THE GOLD CARD. DAD GETS  
THE FAKE ID AND THE BIG FINAL.'

#### TRAILERS

PIPI LONGSTOCKING  
SHORT CIRCUIT 2  
THINGS CHANGE

#### CHERRYPACK

"THE NAME'S TRIGGER; AS IN  
THE HORSE; AS IN YOUNG LIKE A..."

Anybody unaccustomed by the grim jokiness of our cover film, *Emporia*, is advised to investigate the Freudian intricacies of the 1987 Dudley Moore laugh-gamble, *Like Father Like Son*, which suddenly seeks to chronicle the travail of an infant dismembered of childhood's crystal-tipped Arcadia and banished to the gale-force pandemonium of adult life.

Dudley Moore phones in his usual boozey crass-central performance as whiskeyed-up, buxom'd down morganic Mr. Jack Hammond. A nap and a rock away from being appointed Chief of Staff by the cabal of freeze-dried war criminals who make up the Hospital board, she last daying the good doctor amidst put noms at for his gang-boomng son (Kirk Cameron) as he starts down some improved Narcoleptic brain transference serum in a series of operatic debauchery straight out of Faustini's style. Unfortunately, he's dialed out of back, because that is precisely what's occurring, and before he knows what's what he's trapped inside the body of a 15-year-old while his son is fossilized in the skin of a vulgar cockney diva.

Cameron single doorknobs and ties and closes the door on his way out of the plot, abandoning us to a film now entirely dependent on the ability of a towed-on pensioner from the East End of London to persuade us that he's "hot" so the recondite son can gorge and libidinate among ranks of spook Orange County high schoolers.

After painful forewarning with the all-female whereabouts in Disney's *Friday*, the career man migrations that rivaled Chevy Chase's oil refinery days, and the gender-bending alimony of

Steve Martin/Lily Tomlin reverie, *Off-Duty*, the age-wrap genre finally came home to daddy in 1987 with the boy's only club card by *L.F.S.*

Trafficking in another the wilful senescence that marked Judge Reinhold's *Foxfire* nor the generational screwball of George 'El Gorilla' Burns' *If Ages*, we're overwhelmed by the hysterical consciousness swapede due to ex-gigolo Tom Hanks in *Jig*. *Bozo's* film is liberated to explore the obsession of an entire generation of fathers with prioritizing the importance of adulthood in favour of the coddled, overprotected lifestyle of their own pubescent offspring.

It is perhaps indicative of the post-war comfort zone of the American male, where men and boys alike yearned for that surreal *From Niggle* on which they borrowed dad's car, spok'd the punch at the Stick Up Bill and managed to get their hand up Mary Lou's freckle, when numbers listed a lifetime, country was king and world-like foreign policy, 'crack sentences' and 'high school thuggery' were other people's problems.

In this what F. Scott Fitzgerald meant when he said, "There are no second acts in American lives," Or was he just pissed up on beans?

**SHORT FILM**  
THE FULL CHAPTER

*shot filmmakers*



# diary: part III

If a week is a long time in politics, then it's an epoch in filmmaking. Last time I wrote this column I was giddy with the excitement of having a lead man in the bag, a shiny location in the diary and several weeks to hone my preparations to perfection.

Four months later, I found myself with no script at all, no location, but nevertheless hauled up in my usual hair kit, crew and insurance – all to the tune of about six grand. As if to prove the axiom that short filmmaking is nothing if not unpredictable, the next seven days followed the two golden rules of the me-frame #1: Whatever the problem, there is always a way around it; and, conversely, #2: just when you think things can't get any worse, they do.

Forty-eight hours before the shoot is due to start, it looks miraculously like we're either out of the woods, or at least on the cusp of some excellent hiking gear and a campsite. Location Manager Sarah has found a band sure that perfectly straddles the director/designer divide we're after. The wonderful Maggie O'Neill (sheols from *Shameless*) is our female lead and, against all the odds, a certain TV queen star has agreed to play the other main role. Rule #1 has been fulfilled with aplomb. Cue Rule #2:

Picture the scene: it's 5pm on Friday, the last weekday before the shoot. You're looking back, reviewing the finer details of the charter while your producer does

a nervous fag-end round to organise the a.mom' pack-up for Monday. And then you overhear the following conversation: "Hi there TV gal star, I'm just checking in to see what you'd like to be picked up for the shoot on Monday?" Faust: "Sunday?" Faust: "No, Monday and Tuesday." Long, long pause. "You're in Spain? Spain on Tuesday?" The longest pause. "Can I call you back?"

Producer Steve and I pass the next three hours in a tele-home binary, and finally landed Tessa Lee as a replacement. Contrary to all expectations, our last-minute recruit actually fitted the role better than our original choice, and seemed only mildly perturbed by the fact that he had to learn his lines in less time than most of us would take to set the video. Thanks too go to Shashua The Wonderful Wardrobe Lady, whose efforts over the weekend meant that Tessa had a (perfectly) air-tight polycarbonate suit spread out and waiting for her come Monday morning.

By then I was like a housewife on *Valhalla*, blissfully oblivious to everything going on outside my immediate field of vision as the mechanics of the shoot whirred into action. For my money, this is the toughest part of direction, just intuitionally knowing the film well enough that you can answer any of the thousand or so questions that

are thrown your way every minute – "What shade of make-up should Maggie wear?" "Which shirt?" "What magazine should I be reading?" "How fast?" "How many pillows do we need on the bed?" "What colour?" – and all while avoiding being tucked to far into the minutiae of production that you don't simultaneously agree with your Director of Photography suggestion watching from Super Bloom on camera phone. Thankfully, the people around me made life easy, and I was able to concentrate on the important things – like explaining to Tim how best to fall into a plant pot, or passing out to Maggie the scenic merits of 'going out more cleavage'.

As it turned out, the most challenging moment was not selecting the right lenses or refining a difficult camera move, but explaining to a member of the kitchen staff that a vegetarian sandwich not only has to feature vegetables, has also needs to contain beef. That batch aside, everything went as well as could reasonably be expected. We finished on schedule. We got (most of) the shot we needed. We even had enough time, goodwill and money in the bank to offer our truly superb crew a pint after the wrap. And, best of all, I can finally say this for real: the film is literally in the can. Now it just needs developing, transferring, editing, grading, colouring... *Adieu*.



**SHORT FILM**  
COMBINATION STORIES LIKE A CHAOTIC SNAKE

# fit to fifty



Anyone who watched the often execrable late night films on ITN4 should be well used to the – occasionally clumsy – CohenVision short that runs before it, many of which have been cut down from much longer versions or fit the 15-second format.

However, since increasing the running time from 15 seconds to 30, the quality of submissions has increased markedly, with more films being made specifically for the competition rather than edited down from an art school project.

Over the last three months, winners have captured modern mania (Paul Stakkar's *After the Bridge*), been bizarre traps (and coffee hallucinations) in Tim

Lewis' *Offices*), made us laugh (rolling road signs in Orwoll and Kennedy's *It's a Living*), or ponder the materialistic (Mike Shepherd's poem in-home ownership, *All Alone*).

Tony Jardine's *Prey Metal* (Pictured above) is the best of the bunch, containing many of the elements that can make a short film great. It's very slick, quickly on and off to the point. Here's to Cohen's own featuring many more in that vein. Remember the golden rule of a feature fresh like a short, it's a triumph. If a short feels like a feature, it's a travesty. *Just as I said*.

[www.coltelevision.co.uk](http://www.coltelevision.co.uk)

TAKE YOUR BRAIN TO ANOTHER DIMENSION

# 3D FILM

three is the  
magic number



Major production companies are boldly announcing the rebirth of the 3D format. *3D* is rocking the IMAX right now, while 2010 will see *DreamWorks' Monsters vs. Aliens* and James Cameron's *Avatar* join the fray. *Tarzan* is scheduled for worldwide release in 2010, but before that the first ever will be re-filmed with an extra dimension. But should we really get excited about the return of 3D when it was such a letdown in the first place?

Founder and CEO of Zavvi Digital, Steve Schkdar, says the only way people will accept 3D films is if they forget the experience of yesterday's. "That isn't the 3D of the past," he says. "Watching 3D used to be uncomfortable because it was a horridous barrage of gratuitous images that made people feel like they were being poked." 3D isn't a gimmick, although nothing adds to filmmaking."

agrees Dennis Law, the technical and general manager of the BFI IMAX in London's Waterloo. "Just like making a film in black and white, there has to be a reason for doing it."

3D premiered at Sundance to rave reviews because it blurred the lines between film and concert, and yet not every film will be suited to this style of viewing. "Every film won't benefit," admits Law. "3D gives people a chance to see what the hand is doing because you feel like you're there, but something like *Transformers* would be horrendous because it's so fast that your eyes would have trouble keeping up."

But exactly how can the industry big wigs erase the memory of the dreadful green and red glasses that are so deeply associated with 3D films? "People think that 3D isn't new but it's different thanks to one word – digital. Digital

filmmaking has completely changed the concept of 3D films," argues Schkdar. "When people say it's a 'gimmick' it's because it's new, but people thought colour was a gimmick." And the crappy glasses? "They are a definite thing of the past."

Whether this is simply a marketing ploy to get buzz on static remakes to be seen but all those involved in the re-emergence of 3D agree that it's a way of reminding people that watching a film in the cinema is an experience that can't be matched by a laptop screen or a bootleg DVD. "Will it vanish again?" pondered Dennis Law. "I don't know, but if the companies keep their investment and the UK Film Council continues to convert screens then it could last for a while. The great thing about 3D is that you can become part of a concept instead of just watching a concept." *Zavvi* tell

# the lives of otters

What was it about otters that means we should find in them the story of life, death and horrific mountain disasters? The story canon of otter movies is defined by the sort of tragedy that belies the playful nature of these wet, vicious, suddenly sadistic little fellows. In this world there are sweet beginnings and tragic whammy, but no happy endings.

Just as doctors have rushed to share their paraplegic patient patient Schindler's *The Strong Bell and the Butterfly*, for years kids have been recommended Jack Coyle's *Ring of Bright Water* to prepare them for the death of a loved one or family pet. Or just to make them cry a lot. Once you know that, you begin to get an idea of the incredible schizophrenia of the movie's structure. Our hero, Orvaline, dares his master crushing life in a mass unwrapping London of the late '60s when he's landed with a pet otter, Big Dancerino in Scotland. Big wriggles and scratches his way through trashing, time-pardonous escapades — scoffing por' salt, wrenching houses, trundling our hero on the roof of his cottage and creating river nymphs. Later local via Virginia McKenna, wrangling wildly with a Highland scenes packed somewhere between Miss Jean Brodie and Lorna Luftie, and we have a three way love story doused in buckets of misery, capped by an act of the blue shovel master that you giddily believe must be some kind of bad joke of a dream sequence. But no. Then's the break, kids. *Ring of Bright Water* is just about the cruelest film that sort of Gibson's *The Power of the Cheshire Cat*.

By unhappy coincidence, the other great otter star, Tarka, was played by a specimen of *Lutra lutra* called Spike. But

at least his momma carried a warning, on the full title of Henry Williamson's 1927 otter epic set amid the brooks of North West Dorset, *Tarka the Otter: His Joyful War, Life and Death in the Country of the Five Rivers*. That's life and death, and that being otter death it's unlikely to be seen in old age in a feather bed, surrounded by well-wishing grown-grand-otters.

2004's *Water* makes an unusual reference of Tarka's life from remaining newborn through unkindled abandonment by his entire family as the harshly snubbed up-hoppers close in on him. In keeping with Williamson's prose-Green, anti-hunting stance, the little water-penitent has it given, and Tarka meets his end at the paws of the equally deserved hunting dog (deadlock.

No death but plenty of vital destroying happenings in *Dinner for One's Jag-Bad Christmas*. Jim Henson and Frank Oz successfully tapped into the fanatical death cults of outer space. *Jag-Bad* is up there with *Andy* as the pantheon of dreams chasing fantasies of our poor boy/mammal made good against the odds. Among the dim poor Muppets of the Guard museum, Emmett and his widowed old Ma sell their last pathetic halo-egg for the one they desire: a winning the town's \$10 talent contest and a special Christmas in light their grinding existence. They win through in classic style, but then a big minute early from drugged swamp punkin and local gang rival The Nightmare Band rocks the competition and takes the prize. Emmett and his Ma are left poorer than ever. The lesson? Forgive your 'Jag-Bad' and go electric, you fatty punks.





IN A SINGLE MOMENT I MADE MY CHOICE,  
I FOUND MY HEART, I HEARD MY VOICE.  
I CHOSE TO STAND UP, TAKE THE CHANCE,  
I CHOSE THE RISK, TO MAKE ADVANCE.  
AND IN DETERMINATION'S WAKE  
THE FORWARD MOTION WOULD NOT BREAK.  
MY FUTURE CHANGED, NOT LIKE BEFORE,  
THAT MOMENT MADE ME  
ALL I AM NOW AND MORE.

# FILM KNIGHTS

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**CHAPTER SIX**  
**DON'T BELIEVE**  
**THE HYPE**  
**INCOMING MOVIES**

# **LAID BARE**



## Valkyrie.

By Bryan Singer

Kennedy-Krámer has made a million out of Count Claus von Stauffenberg, the one-eyed Nazi colonel whose last-minute assassination plot to assassinate Hitler ends in his own execution. Now Bryan Singer is out to rehabilitate von Stauffenberg and add an English-language voice to the already distinguished canon of films about German resistance during World War II. *Caveat Emptor* (see below) has the best cast, but with director Frank Capra playing the anti-Nazi spokesman — and Sepulchre's wire-glass tables buried among his skewed set-pieces — it's one might struggle to stomach the "respectable-as-fuck" paradigm. **RR. Late 2008.**

## Quid Pro Quo.

By Carter Bays

The Coulterites have us strong with their sex, and Kirk Douglas' death/dissolver Charles Bronson comes to be making quite a name for himself. *Quid Pro Quo* follows a journalist sent to interview a man who chose to sacrifice his healthy leg — a job that causes him to enter a bizarre substitute of penitentiary existence. It's far too kooky, but with the increasingly pernicious Mark Wahlberg in the lead role and with sexiness and entertainment rather than social justice as the film's main focus, that could turn out to be that enormously earn laughs. The Burden's *Execution* presumably worthy of looking at big. **R/R. TBC.**

## The Informers.

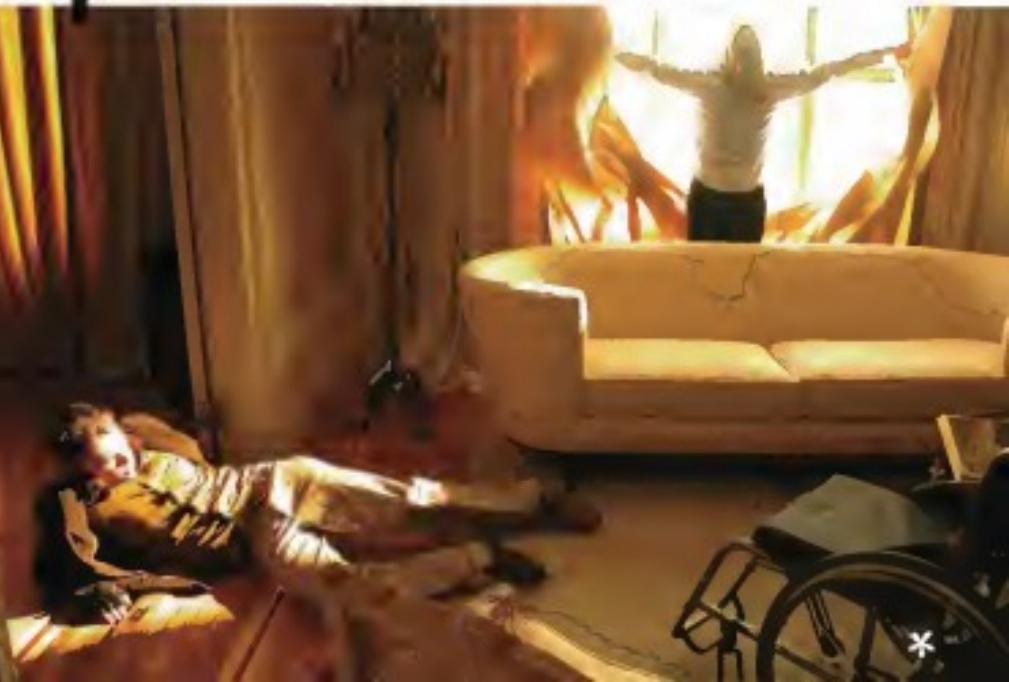
By Roger Ebert

This adaptation of Bertolt Brecht's *Death of a Salesman* concerns short stories and scenes a week in an 1880s French shooting party weeks before the death of the play's hero, Max Requiem. Brecht was best known for his starting rains in Act I (plus still sleeps), and it looks as if his had. He will be of a similar quality, with Buffalo Soldiers (notorious dragon slayers at the time) and an ensemble cast featuring Billy Bob Thornton, Marisa Tomei and Mickey Rourke. This will likely be better than *Balalaika*, of which it has such an good an American Populus. **R/R. Late 2008.**

## Atlas Shrugged.

By Melinda Newman

In 1957 Ayn Rand delivered *Atlas Shrugged*, her defining work and one of the longest novels ever written. Now a plutocrat-named neotopian tells of a cultural revolution whereby all the world's aristocrats smash their lamps out the press and set off to face their own nuptials. Deprived of great artists, scientists and business leaders, the rest of the planet goes to the dogs. Now, some 51 years later, we can dispense with reading and simply watch the site, thanks to Ayn Rand and ring director Volodya Perlovitch. Ampleaks John stars alongside fresh meat Jason Clay, but the author-of-the-idea factor will surely be Percyant's own handling of the original. Adaptation from Hell. **R/R. Late 2008.**



## Captain Abu Raed.

By Amit Bhagat

PEACE OFF, ISRAELIS! map an end, Captain Abu Raed is not the kind of terrorist anyone wants. PELL. A lot of water has passed under the bridge since the last one struggled in *Death*, made his back in 1997, a fort to which the aged Palestinian refugee camp along Jordan's western border got eloquent treatment. This sweetly political fable features from Amos Gitai's — the tale of a peasant况 for an airline pilot — engages giddily with regular concerns by involving refugee children among its large ensemble cast. But Gitai has a job to do: if he's to convince the world that "Judaean life, the industry" isn't a euphemism for "trap-tak" (see for here). He wish him well. **ETB** July 30th

## Made in America.

By Scott Paetz

Anyone familiar with Powell Yates's innovative and accomplished skate videos in the '80s checks out the narrative-driven school chisel will be unprepared at Tony Parada's vision promulgated as a maturing documentary maker. Freshly returned to humanity, *Made in America* presents an unapologetic look at gang violence in the dirty city of Angeles, and explores how today's gang culture came into being. Yates apparently worked hard to get a "pass" from both the police and the feds to make the film, but success with the project appears to major influences — notably the impact of Hollywood and gangsta rap — would break this one off-camera. **EEA** Late 1998

## Choke.

By Eric Gegg

Like banal culturists and the music of Robert Wuhl, chick flicks adaptations don't lend themselves to an equivocal reaction; years either make the former General Sargeant stuff as painful as really, really rot. Perhaps that's why, despite the runaway success of *Fight Club*, we have taken almost a decade for anyone else to take a chance on *Choke*. After all, a movie about a new addition who makes a living pretending to choke in restaurants is always going to be a tough sell without Brad Pitt as lead. Choke makes do with reliable hunk Ben Stiller, fresh from *Swimming Pool's* shoulder in *Jeanne James*. If a Sundance Guard, Jerry Fodor recommends anything to go lay, the tanky demographic could be in for a treat. **ETB** July 30th

## Nothing is Private.

By Alan Ball

An oppressed young girl, raped by her neighbors, seeks comfort in the arms of partly-clad, young men in this coming-of-age literary memoirs of Alanna Brizel's *Powerhead*. Ball has previous experience of provocative sexual encounters with American Society, but it will still be a challenge to make the novel's rawer scenes of foreboding — and its shielded narration through the eyes of a 13-year-old. One to keep your eye on, we hope. *Sally in the Bellis*, either when just, you know, hellin. **ETB** August 30th

## Mongol.

By Sergei Bodrov

Sergei Bodrov's *Monghol Khan* (Impala) has had a bumpy ride. Mongolian authorities have accused the Russian director of "professing and manipulating the national pride of the Mongolian people" for celebrating their national love to an ancient adventure hero, but it looks like Bodrov is having the last laugh. Not only did Mongol make it to the short list for most foreign film at Massachusetts' official Oscar® ceremony, but it also won the grand prize after a number of such screenings in the US. As the film prepares for its UK opening on June, anticipation and expectation are building for this, the first in a projected trilogy of lush, sweeping action movies that promise to be quite unlike anything else around right now. Is this Kazakhstan's crowning tiger? We'll know soon enough. **ETB** June 20th

## How to Lose Friends & Alienate People.

By Robert K. Weiss

The unmissable rise to hyperstardom of Jason Mewes continues with this fictionalized account of Rob Young's time working as a security guard in New York on a role that might once have been played by Hugh O'Brian's Egghead. Mewes stars as Kidney Young alongside Kieran Culkin as his love interests and Jeff Bridges as Pegg's right-hand editor. The heavy-metal-almost-black humor trailer makes it look like a tame, malice-with-a-twink version of *The Devil Wears Prada*, but early word suggests it's actually quite funny. The pairing of Mewes and Pegg is bound to prompt some laughs, at any rate. **ETB** October 19th

## The Curious Case of Benjamin Button.

By David Fincher

If there are no good few smalls available online for Finch's bedrock-sympathy project, and sees if they look pretty unsettling. Thanks to the lesson in certain-cutups bials and whatnots, Brad Pitt will play the hero at every stage of his descent into youth — even the manner which portrays the sprightly Barker as a baby. *Button* looks like something of a departure for Finch, it's extremely dark material, but it's also less self-consciously cool than serial killers or underground bombing terrorists. There's nothing trashy about the battle with age — just ask the critics outside your local plastic surgery clinic. **ETB** December 19th



## Miracle at St. Anna.

**at St. Anna.** (Dr. Sykes' Lab.)

When he's not on all cylinders, Spike Lee is one of the most remarkable members of the Association for Aggressively Appraised Artistic Effluvia. **IMPERIAL**, Spike's last effort, 33007's *PEACE AND WAR*, was a polished but simple *Rebel Without a Cause* set in the 1930s. Now he's heralded a return to more volatile territory. A writing by journalist Jason Morris, below, has Spike's soldiers trapped in a Tuscan village towards the end of World War II, while the title's key focus is on the *Army Air Corps'* wanton, brutal execution of 1400 villagers at the hands of the SS. The tall cast includes Derek Luke, Joseph Fiennes, James Gandolfini, and neural misprints John Turturro and John Leguizamo. There's a curious lack of screen time at the moment, but who needs plot? What's merely loosely to come? **THE LATE SHOW**

**Burn After  
Reading.**

The 2009-10 MPEM MPA: A PRACTICAL

The brothers are tracking the thirty miles of state line. A resource CIA agent completes his mission, only to have been beaten by his shadow wife — who promptly leaves the US as her legal gyro. The diler is found by a personal trainer, who wisely adopts a program of political blackmail. John Malkovich, Frances McDormand, Edie Falco and George Clooney are aboard, but the bigger news is that the Coen are rethinking the necessity of regular moviegoing. Instead, they've created a database base dedicated to Paramount Pictures, which contains detailed information about the awesome tracking stats in *Children of Men*. A change of goals for the nibble? We doubt it, but as long as they're on the nosebleed of no chance for old men, there will be few challenges. **ETC. June 2009**

## Where in the World is Osama Bin Laden?

**DEIN Laden:** DEINE Anregungen aufnehmen

George W. Bush may not know, but Morgan Spurlock just might. *Breaking My Fast* (Fox Books). The grumpy documentarian grabbed a camera and set out last year to find the evidence mentioned. Spurlock apparently sees the need for Ian Lakin to travel across the Middle East, measuring the cost of Islamic terrorism and pondering the uncertain world Ian will be left holding when his unknown son the web is crawling with spoilers. If you want to know whether or not Spurlock actually managed to find Bush's original memo, the January premiere at *Breakfast* will be with some extremely mixed reviews, with some suggesting that when Ian was lobbied more than a chance for Spurlock to bootstrap it around some pretty detainees acting like your typical *ARMED FORK* TANK COLLECTOR. But the *WALSTADT* Co. reportedly forked out major dollars for the distribution rights. We should see whether the bet has paid off before the end of the year. **BIG BIC**



## Pineapple Express.

**Express** is a free newspaper  
aimed at young people aged 16-25.

We've spoken before about our contention with the  
present trajectory of our country. This has begun  
as a result of greater and greater dependence, arising  
in the unfertilized oceans of north Carolina.  
Having received the expected sophomore studies,  
"2273" from Angelo heavily saw the law of  
engines whip him, as he seemed old and tired.  
And his creation to see him! Pineapple  
comes. Reason to feel positive! She is, you see,  
from the Judd Agency! Seth Regan has factory  
and a statue, and his doctor at the run. Reason to  
feel negative! We never saw DOD so anybody else's  
name. ETC. September 2181

## The Box.

**Westward ho!** Eastwood Kelly and the U.S. space program need NASA. That, as a metaphor, was the message put out to local residents at the sound studio below, brought his circus to Hampton, Virginia. Kelly and his crew have been filming at NASA's Langley Research Center, as we presume that hairy astronauts will injure heavily on the pitch. Above the scene of household failure, we're not ruling anything out, especially given the fact that the space agency has been the butt of many a jibe at the grammar school. Kelly and James Warden receive a mysterious box that contains one large wad of cash every time they push a button, but the catch is the life of a random stranger. It's a decent concept, so let's hope Kelly returns to Earth. **IMDb rating: 1918**

## UNBECOMING

The members of DRILLING point a silencer bullet in the breast of an approaching bandit. Then comes, from the mouth of Big the bandit, the famous line:

man she is, Muriel's day job is street peddling. This musical-to-movie thing has got her to work regularly. Last change, then another of the opera, then Broadway, and now the typical bus-taking working-class scenes. If you don't see one of the 10 Broadway people who have reportedly been seen in Broadway as in the last few days, she'll just, such as it is, wear Sophie (Academy Award) costume for her mother's former loves in order to feel the identity of her father. Muriel doesn't play her mother, and the three potential daddies can learn Earth, Faustos, and Hell — in a noisy place of casting — have won. Theatrical Melville Marquand

"I'm forced to say what I mean. The End-Short "greenback bills" of 1863 will no doubt become popular all over again, or that a want of their undiluted quality has been reduced to appearing in a bill that seems like nothing more than a \$100 bill right.

## UNCOMING

Following the lines that will give

## Ronnie Rocket or The Absurd Mystery of the Strange Forces of Existence.

Originally planned for Jim Lynd's *Frontline*, this after-dinner speech by Rocket has gone through many revisions over the years without ever coming closer to being realized on film. This might be due to the fact that even by the director's own warped standards, *Moskito*

Our misery's here in a heavily disguised last-round struggle. One early death sentence has been: "There are no heroes from us really, enough he does have one and two, but they're under the sheets." The chest and head eyes are very strongly shaped, but those at a hole for a mouth and a nose, in the mouth there are both a tongue and a tongue which moves. There are two eyes, the nose splits, the nose don't look, and looks.

Families appear to have more form of appreciation electronic power, a quality that makes him appealing to Dr Ben Kirk and Dr Bob Plautz — a pair who met three days ago and got into violent punches over Kirk's bid for the kidney sample and suspiciously customized his with electronic organs later on. Kirk's testicular screening name has a recording

Other substances stimulate a certain self-healing memory and a psychopath with a hand that appears to be made of stone. And if you think all this sounds crazy,

**CHANCE OF REDEMPTION**—Given Taylor's clear love for the project, it's quite possible that *Musical Machine* might eventually see the light of day. We live in equal parts hope and terror.

**STAR  
WARS**

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